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**Caring for Migrants: Policy Responses to Irish
Migration to England, 1940-1972**

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degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History

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DECLARATION

This thesis is the candidate's own work and has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

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ABSTRACT

Large-scale interstate migration raises questions about where the responsibility for migrant welfare lies, whether with the sending state and its institutions, the receiving state or both. Across the middle decades of the twentieth century, around half a million people left Ireland, the majority for England. This study analyses the policy responses of governmental, Catholic church and voluntary organisations in both countries to Irish migrant welfare. Using records from Irish and English diocesan archives and the National Archives of Ireland and England the study identifies the policy claims that were made to church and state in the two countries and the responses that resulted. The majority of migrants were young, single and migrating alone. A distinctive feature was that, for much of the period covered, female migrants outnumbered males. The young age and gender of these migrants made moral welfare a major concern. The Irish Catholic hierarchy, led by the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr John Charles McQuaid, accepted responsibility for Irish migrant welfare and understood their needs through a discourse of ‘faith and morals’. This interpretation led to solutions designed to support religious faith and practice delivered by Catholic priests and lay volunteers. Both the Irish government and British institutions (state and voluntary) accepted the centrality of Catholicism to Irish identity and the right of the Catholic church to lead welfare policy and provision for Irish migrants. No alternative understanding of Irish migrant needs within a secular framework emerged during this period. This meant that whilst the Irish hierarchy developed policy responses based on their assessment of need, other agencies, notably the British and Irish governments, did not consider any specific policy response for Irish migrants to be required.

ABBREVIATIONS

BAA	Birmingham Archdiocesan Archives
CCCR	Camden Committee for Community Relations
CHAS	Catholic Housing Aid Society
CPRSI	Catholic Protection and Rescue Society of Ireland
CSSC	Catholic Social Services Conference
CSWB	Catholic Social Welfare Bureau
DDA	Dublin Diocesan Archives
FERES	Federation of Catholic Institutes for Social and Socio-Religious Research
IWIC	Irish Welfare and Information Centre, Birmingham
ICEM	Intergovernmental Committee on European Migration
ICMC	International Catholic Migration Commission
NAI	National Archives, Ireland
NDS	Newman Demographic Survey
NVA	National Vigilance Association
PICMME	Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe
TNA	The National Archives, Kew
WDA	Westminster Diocesan Archives
YCW	Young Christian Workers

INTRODUCTION

The 'Irish habit of going away' was noted as long ago as the ninth century, and its persistence has given rise to the belief that 'migration seems to be one of [the] most ingrained [Irish] national instincts.'¹ By the 1770s, population growth and pressure on economic resources led to the emergence of sustained emigration, largely to the United States but with significant numbers leaving for mainland Britain.² The Great Famine of 1846-47 precipitated an acceleration in migration associated with continuing population decline which continued to the early 1960s.³ Net migration reached a peak of 60,000 per year in the decade 1881-1891, falling back to lower levels thereafter. In the period covered by this study (1940 to 1972), net annual average migration varied from a high of 41,000 in the years 1951 to 1961, to a low of 13,000 in the subsequent decade.⁴ Mid-twentieth century emigration was distinguished from the earlier phase in that mainland Britain was the primary destination. Between 1880 and 1921, 87 per cent of gross migration was to the United States, with only 10 per cent going to mainland Britain. This pattern reversed during the Great Depression and did not change subsequently.⁵ Although data on migratory outflows by destination is not available for most of the period covered by this study, estimates indicate that over the period 1940 to 1972, mainland Britain was the destination for over 80 per cent of Irish migrants.⁶ A particular feature of Irish migration was its gender distribution. For two periods covered by this study, female migrants

¹ R C Geary, 'Some reflections on Irish population questions', *Studies, An Irish Quarterly Review*, 43 (1954), p.172.

² John Archer Jackson, *The Irish in Britain* (London, 1963), p.3.

³ National Economic and Social Council, *The Economic and Social Implications of Emigration* (Dublin, 1991), p.47.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.53.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.60.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.58, 60.

outnumbered males. Between 1946 and 1951, 1,365 females emigrated for every 1,000 males. Between 1961 and 1971, the ratio was 1,157 females per 1,000 males.⁷ At the time of the 1971 census, among Irish born UK residents there were 92 men per 100 women, compared to 94 men per 100 women among those born in the UK. This feature of Irish migration marks it out from other migrant groups in which male migration was more usual. In 1971, there were 118 males per 100 females among Indian born UK residents and 258 males per 100 females among the Pakistani/Bangladeshi born groups. High rates of female migration were also seen among those born in the Caribbean, where the sex ratio was 100 females per 100 males.⁸ The high rates of females migrating from Ireland on their own account (rather than as wives or children) is explained by the wide disparities in the female labour market between Ireland and Britain, with more opportunities for female employment (particularly in nursing and domestic work) in the latter.⁹

Drivers for emigration included the poor development of the Irish economy, easy access to areas of greater economic development and an established tradition of migration.¹⁰ Economic modelling has demonstrated that the relative difference between the Irish and British labour markets was the major driver of migration between the two countries at any given time. The pecuniary, social and psychic costs of migration from Ireland to Britain were low. There were no hurdles such as the requirement for a visa or confirmation of employment before departure, travel costs were relatively cheap and many people had established kin or other social networks in Britain. If things did not work out, a return to

⁷ NESC, *Economic and Social Implications of Emigration*, Table 3.1, p.68.

⁸ Ibid., Table A7.3, p.289.

⁹ Ibid., p.162.

¹⁰ Enda Delaney, *State, Demography and Society: Irish Migration to Britain, 1921-1971* (Liverpool, 2000), p.13.

Ireland was reasonably easy. As a result, migration to Britain was an option for those with little financial capital, low educational attainment or skills and those in poor physical or mental health. The ease of migration from Ireland to Britain contrasted with long distance migration (to the US, Australia or Canada) where the higher financial and social capital costs created a positive selection bias for those with better qualifications and health.¹¹ Settlement patterns in Britain reflected areas of economic growth offering good employment prospects to new, largely unskilled, migrants. For most of the twentieth century, these areas were concentrated around London, the Midlands and the South East.¹² By 1966, there were 714,000 people born in the Irish Republic resident in mainland Britain, nearly 200,000 more than had been resident in 1951.¹³ This study seeks to explore to what extent this significant movement of people gave rise to concerns regarding their social, moral or physical welfare, what policy claims were made, by whom and to which institutions, to address these concerns and what services resulted. This is an aspect of Irish migration in the twentieth century that has so far received little attention.

Literature Review

Much has been written about Irish emigration generally, but the literature on twentieth-century Irish migration to Britain is not extensive. The available literature tends to concentrate on the lived experience of migrants rather than the

¹¹ Liam Delaney, Alan Fernihough and James P Smith, 'Exporting poor health: the Irish in England', RAND Labor and Population Working Paper, WR-863, July 2011, p.19 [consulted at: www.rand.org/pubs/working_papers/W863.html (23 September 2012)].

¹² Alan Strachan, 'Post-war Irish migration and settlement in England and Wales', in Russell King (ed.), *Contemporary Irish Migration* (Dublin, 1991), p.22

¹³ In 1951, 517,000 people born in the Irish Republic were resident in mainland Britain. Figures taken from: 1966 Census, quoted in O'Connor, *The Irish in Britain*, p.152; 1951 Census data quoted in Jackson, *The Irish in Britain*, p.187. The 1966 Census was an experiment in carrying out a small-scale five year census based on a 10 per cent population sample – it was not repeated [consulted at: www.census.ac.uk/guides/About.aspx (15th May 2012)].

particular welfare and social issues raised by migration and institutional and policy responses to them, which are the focus of this study. Nevertheless, there are a number of studies that give at least a narrative account of services provided for Irish migrants to Britain and these provide a starting point for the present study.

John Archer Jackson's 1963 study of the Irish in Britain remains a major contribution to the field although now somewhat dated.¹⁴ His work, which provides a synopsis of Irish migration to Britain from the eighteenth century to the 1950s, was prompted by the observation that migration within the British Isles, including that of the Irish to mainland Britain, was considered as part of the 'rural-urban exodus', rather than as inter-state migration, and that, combined with lack of major distinctions between the migrants and host population (the example he stressed was 'skin colour') made migration a 'relatively uncomplicated affair'. Jackson sought to test that assumption by reviewing the contemporary position of the Irish in Britain, as the largest immigrant group there, in the context of the history of Irish settlement over the preceding two hundred years.¹⁵ Much of the book concentrates on drivers of emigration and patterns of social settlement and occupation, charting a progression from segregation in poor housing and low-skilled, low-status occupations to one of near integration into the British socio-economic framework.¹⁶ However, in his chapter on the contemporary relationship between the Catholic church and the Irish migrant, Jackson notes that 'a good deal of concern [has] been expressed by the hierarchies of both England and Ireland over the problems of Irish immigrants'. He does not provide any detail on the nature of these problems or

¹⁴ John Archer Jackson, *The Irish in Britain* (London, 1963), p.xii.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.xii.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.79, 109, 192, 198-199.

policy debates about them but does note the provision by the Irish hierarchy of 'special missions' and the loan of Irish priests to areas of high Irish settlement. He also describes the establishment of Irish Centres in London, Birmingham and Manchester, with the objective of supporting new migrants in finding work and lodgings, and characterises these centres as 'official and organised aspects of Catholic welfare'. Again, he does not provide any indication of the debates and processes that led to the adoption of 'Irish Centres' as part of 'official' policy. Jackson identified the contribution of these centres to Irish welfare as 'considerable' but he believed that the greatest 'burden' (presumably of responding to welfare problems, although Jackson left this unspecified) still fell on 'the individual parish priest'. Without citing any sources, Jackson states that new arrivals expected the priest at their destination to provide them with 'work, food, lodging and often money'.¹⁷ Failure by the church to provide this level of care, unreasonable though the expectation might be, was cited as one of the reasons migrants became 'disillusioned' with religion. Indeed, the drift from religious practise, rather than social welfare problems, emerges as the main concern of the English and Irish hierarchies at that time. Jackson notes articles in Irish Catholic journals, such as *Christus Rex*, which estimated that up to 50 per cent of Catholics born in Ireland ceased to practise their religion in England; the basis for such assertions was not stated. However, better documented evidence, such as the observation that in one Bristol parish 60 per cent of Irish Catholics married a non-Catholic partner tended to support the 'drift from faith' assertion. Jackson interpreted this as evidence for the low level at which Catholicism was internalised in 'the Irishman'. That is, religion was a matter of

¹⁷ Ibid., p.147.

‘social and ritual forces’ beyond which the individual had little understanding of the meaning of their faith.¹⁸ Jackson found himself unable to reach a firm conclusion on the ‘degree of influence’ of the Catholic church over Irish migrants since the evidence of overworked priests and crowded churches on the one hand and of extensive drift from religious practice on the other, was conflicting. He did not attempt a sustained analysis of the role of the Catholic church (English or Irish) in welfare provision for migrants, nor did he include any discussion of the role of the British or Irish governments or other statutory or voluntary agencies.

In 1967, the British sociologists, John Rex and Robert Moore provided a case study of Irish migrants in the Birmingham suburb of Sparkbrook, almost by chance.¹⁹ The main focus of their study was the relationship between coloured (‘black Commonwealth’) immigration, race relations and housing. To explore this, they chose to investigate a ‘twilight zone’, a neighbourhood characterised by old properties in poor condition, high levels of multi-occupation (usually old terraced properties converted into lodging houses) and high levels of immigration.²⁰ Although an area of high immigration, the largest group in Sparkbrook at the 1961 census was still the English, who accounted for 71 per cent of the total. The next largest group was not, in fact, coloured but Irish (17 per cent of the total), followed by West Indians (4.5 per cent), Pakistani/Indian (3 per cent) and ‘other’ (4 per cent).²¹ Interviews carried out with English residents of Sparkbrook provide insight into contemporary attitudes towards immigrants. Fifty-seven respondents thought that immigrants were associated

¹⁸ Jackson, *Irish in Britain*, pp.147-150.

¹⁹ John Rex and Robert Moore, *Race, Community and Conflict: A Study of Sparkbrook* (London, 1967).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.31.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.47.

with social problems. Twenty-six identified 'coloureds' as the main group associated with social problems, but seven mentioned the Irish in this context. Overall, the Irish achieved thirty-four 'unfavourable mentions' in connection with specific social problems (defined as 'decline in physical environment', 'decline in moral environment' and 'other problems'), compared to eighty-four mentions for 'coloureds'. Rex and Moore note that these responses were refracted through local concerns about the housing situation and that it was perceived links between immigrants and neighbourhood decline, rather than simple 'abstract' racial stereotyping, that lay behind the responses.²² Turning to the Irish community, Rex and Moore found that most had arrived during the 1950s although some had lived in Sparkbrook since the 1930s. The Irish were not a homogeneous community but divided into three main and one smaller subgroup. The main groups were the Dubliners, the countrymen (known as 'Culchies' to the Dubliners) and the tinkers (or 'travelling people'). The fourth group, identified by the other Irish groups, lived by 'petty thieving' combined with casual work, 'Unemployment Benefit' and 'National Assurance'. The groups kept themselves separate and there was 'little love lost' between them.²³ The majority of the ninety-nine Irish people interviewed identified 'earning money' or 'finding work' as the major drivers of emigration. 'Joining relatives or friends' was another common reason and a minority cited 'to be away from the family' as a primary reason for leaving Ireland.²⁴ The majority of the men interviewed were employed and they, along with those women who were

²² Ibid., pp.80-83.

²³ Ibid., pp.85-86.

²⁴ Ibid., p.90.

employed outside the home, worked in manufacturing. The average wages for men and women were similar to those for English employees.²⁵

Rex and Moore found that 89 per cent of their sample of eighty-nine Irish interviewees was Roman Catholic and weekly Mass attendance was high, at 57 per cent. This compared with 25 per cent weekly Mass attendance among English Catholic interviewees in Sparkbrook. The authors ascribed the difference to greater secularization among the English and to the fact that the local Catholic churches had effectively become 'Irish institutions...forcing the English Catholic' to move to more distant congregations, thereby increasing 'opportunities and excuses' for 'falling off'.²⁶ The Catholic church was identified as 'one of the most significant social organisations' for the Irish, particularly women.²⁷ Rex and Moore had expected to find the church to be active in spiritual and social welfare work. They identified the Legion of Mary as undertaking the former, 'reclaiming the lapsed and saving others from lapsing' and the St Vincent de Paul Society as providing some material aid. However, they found what they characterised as 'Catholic puritanism' to be of 'prior importance' in any approach to spiritual or material welfare. This 'puritanism' was demonstrated by the parish 'missioner-priest's' clear vision that 'drink and sexual irregularity' were the 'main evils' to be fought. The priest saw his Irish parishioners as a 'vast mass of Irishmen [sic], many of whom would be lost to the Church through drink and sex.' The priest saw his role as one of supporting individuals to resist the temptations around them to achieve 'stable marriage...family life and good housing'. Pubs and lodging-houses stood in the way of this ideal by 'preventing saving' and 'encouraging extra-

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 74, 92.

²⁶ Rex and Moore, *Race, Community and Conflict*, p.96.

²⁷ Ibid., p.97.

marital sex'.²⁸ The priest in charge of the 'Irish Centre' ran a branch of the Catholic Housing Aid Society to encourage people to save for a deposit on a house. However, he was aware that only a minority were involved with this scheme and he considered that 'little could be done for some of the Sparkbrook Irish who wasted all their money on drink'.²⁹ Perhaps as a result of these attitudes, many Irish Catholics in Sparkbrook were either lapsed or attended Mass but 'lived morally in the world of pubs and cafes'.³⁰ Rex and Moore noted that there were English priests in the parishes attended by the Irish and they hypothesised that this might, over time, facilitate the assimilation of committed Irish Catholics, and their children, into English Catholicism. However, at the time of their study they saw little evidence for this. On the other hand, they noted that Catholic schools, often with a large majority of Irish children, had the effect of segregating the Irish.³¹ Jennifer Williams, who contributed a study on 'the younger generation' to the overall study on Sparkbrook, went so far as to state that the provision of a Catholic school in an 'immigrant reception area', where effectively all the immigrant Catholics were Irish, led to a stress on Ireland as the homeland in a way that reinforced the boundaries of the 'immigrant group' and made 'absorption into English society' much slower and more difficult than it needed to have been.³² Despite this, Rex and Moore concluded that 'respectable' Irish people making their first homes in England in Sparkbrook found it easy to assimilate into the English working class and eventually 'migrate to the suburbs'. The 'less-settled' Irish, often those with no or very large families, found it less easy to integrate and move on and, therefore,

²⁸ Ibid., p.151.

²⁹ Ibid., p.152.

³⁰ Ibid., pp.152-153.

³¹ Ibid., p.153.

³² Ibid., p.240.

‘loomed large in the problems of Sparkbrook’s lodging-house area.’ They noted the absence of any ‘Irish-interest organisation [to] fight for the interests of Irishmen [sic] as such’ and concluded that this was because there was ‘no need for one because the opportunities of assimilation are there’.³³ In their recommendations for further action to improve race relations, particularly through the management of housing, Rex and Moore made no specific mention of the Irish immigrant group. Indeed, one of their recommendations, for the establishment of ‘local committees for Commonwealth immigrants which are representative of coloured immigrants as well as of members of the host community with powers to report to local councils’, appears to exclude the Irish as being neither Commonwealth, coloured nor members of the host community.³⁴ Nevertheless, this study does provide some pointers to further research into policy, with the mismatch between the Irish ‘missioner-priest’s’ understanding of welfare need and that experienced by the Irish themselves being of particular interest. Similarly, Rex and Moore identified a disjunction between the approach of the Catholic church being based on a ‘vast mass of Irishmen’ with the reality that the Irish were heterogeneous in terms of spiritual, moral or physical welfare needs.

Kevin O’Connor included a chapter reviewing the ‘social problems’ associated with the Irish in Britain in a book first published in London in 1972.³⁵ The tone of this book, described in the cover notes as ‘outspoken’ is far more polemical than Jackson’s book of the same name, reflecting the fact that

³³ Ibid., pp.154-155.

³⁴ Ibid., p.271.

³⁵ Kevin O’Connor, *The Irish in Britain* (London, 1972 and Dublin, 1974).

O'Connor was a journalist, whereas Jackson was an academic sociologist.³⁶

O'Connor's book was aimed at a more general readership than Jackson's and, after initial publication in Britain, was issued in a paperback edition by a Dublin publisher, presumably with the aim of attracting a general Irish audience.³⁷

Whilst background material on migration from the twelfth century onwards was provided, the main focus for the book was on the situation of the Irish in Britain 'now', the material for which was largely drawn from the period 1960 to 1970.

Unfortunately, O'Connor does not reference his sources, which makes validation of his claims difficult. However, his description and analysis at least provide starting points for further research. O'Connor argued that the Irish government not only did nothing to help the 'inadequate' migrant, but also condoned, 'over many generations, the export of Ireland's mentally ill to Britain.'³⁸ The view that the Irish government used, maybe even encouraged, migration to Britain as a way of filling gaps in funding and provision in Irish social and health care policy was shared by the British social policy analyst, Richard Titmuss.³⁹ O'Connor identified a group of 'inadequate and disturbed' individuals amongst the migrants to Britain but he did not define what he meant by those terms which could potentially cover a range of problems from difficulty arranging employment and accommodation through to those with florid mental illness. O'Connor was critical that, in his view, neither the Irish government nor the 'Irish middle-classes in Britain' did anything to support these individuals

³⁶ Jackson was at Sheffield University when he wrote *The Irish in Britain* (see Jackson, *Irish in Britain*, p.xiii). O'Connor was News Editor of the Irish *Sunday Independent* when he wrote his book of the same name (see <http://www.irishradio.net/index.php?/Who-s-Who/kevin-oconnor.html>; accessed 7 May 2012).

³⁷ O'Connor's book was published first in London by Sidgwick and Jackson in 1972 and then in a revised, paperback edition in Dublin by Torc Books in 1974.

³⁸ O'Connor, *Irish in Britain*, p.118 and p.116.

³⁹ Richard M. Titmuss, *Social Policy: An Introduction* (London, 1974), p.19.

although he provided no argument as to why either the Irish state or more successful migrants should have been expected to do so.⁴⁰ Help was provided, sporadically, by unspecified ‘British voluntary agencies’ and also by Irish Catholic lay organisations – of which he singles out the Knights of St Columba and the Legion of Mary. O’Connor does not describe what these organisations did or whether they did it from Ireland or through British branches. This seems to reflect some confusion on O’Connor’s part since the Knights of St Columba were a specifically British organization, their counterpart in Ireland being the Knights of St Columbanus. The two organisations were separate although both were ‘fraternal societies for Catholic gentlemen’ with the objective of carrying out works of charity in the ‘wider community’.⁴¹ If significant help were being provided through the Knights of St Columba, it would seem that some, at least, of the members involved could have been Irish Catholic ‘gentlemen’ (that is, members of the middle-class) themselves, thus negating O’Connor’s criticism of the ‘Irish middle-classes’, at least in part. The Irish hierarchy was credited with bearing most of the ‘burden’, although the nature of this burden was not specified. O’Connor states that, in response to demand from priests working in Britain, the hierarchy established an ‘emigrant chaplains’ scheme to support parishes with high numbers of Irish. These priests then lobbied the hierarchy to establish ‘welfare centres with resident chaplains’ with the result that, by the time he was writing (in the early 1970s) ‘every area of major urban habitation now [held] an Irish Centre, most of which are staffed with social workers’ with the objective of improving the ‘emigrants’ lot’ with respect to ‘housing,

⁴⁰ O’Connor, *Irish in Britain*, p.118.

⁴¹ The Knights of St Columba was founded in Glasgow in 1919. It operates only in mainland Britain (see www.ksc.org, for further information – accessed 10 May 2012). In Ireland, the Knights of St Columbanus, founded in 1915, have a similar membership and function (see www.knightsofstcolumbanus.ie, accessed 10 May 2012).

employment, and general welfare.’⁴² The work of one emigrant chaplain, Father Eamon Casey, was cited as an example of how a response to a problem initially associated with the Irish could be transferred to the wider British community. Father Casey, noticing the difficulty young Irish families experienced in finding suitable, affordable housing started a scheme to support them in saving for a mortgage. From this parish-based scheme, Casey moved on to become National Director of the Catholic Housing Aid Society, the remit of which extended increasingly beyond the Irish community, since difficulty in obtaining affordable housing was experienced by the wider population as well as the Irish.⁴³

Whilst Casey’s work on housing was cited as a successful initiative arising from the emigrant chaplain scheme, O’Connor also noted the difficulty many Irish priests experienced in responding to the social issues they found amongst the Irish in English cities. These included Irish men in ‘common-law’ marriages, Irish women working as prostitutes and ‘adolescent drug-addicts’. O’Connor claimed that these behaviours were dissonant with the ‘mythology’ of Irish ‘home society’ in which ‘all Irishmen are good, the women chaste [and] the adolescents innocent’. The challenge of reality to belief was allegedly so overwhelming that it caused a high incidence of mental breakdown leading to repatriation amongst the Irish chaplains whose training and experience had not prepared them for these behaviours. O’Connor claimed that, in one year alone, 12 out of 50 emigrant chaplains needed repatriation on health grounds.⁴⁴ The conclusion was that the people charged with supporting Irish migrants with social problems (the emigrant chaplains) were woefully ill equipped to do so

⁴² O’Connor, *Irish in Britain*, pp.118-119.

⁴³ Ibid., p.123.

⁴⁴ O’Connor, *Irish in Britain*, p.124.

since they were ‘hampered by [their] own religious attitudes’.⁴⁵ It should also be noted that some of the behaviours that the emigrant chaplains found difficult to deal with, such as cohabitation, may not have been viewed as problematic by the individuals concerned.

Mary Daly included a chapter on the ways in which Irish migrants in Britain were ‘viewed and treated by the [Irish] state and church’ in her book on the demographic history of Ireland after independence.⁴⁶ Her sources are referenced and include material from the Dublin Diocesan Archives, the National Archives of Ireland and the National Archives of the United Kingdom. She did not, however, include material from English Catholic diocesan archives. Her study does not separate out descriptions of ‘views’ on Irish migrants from definitive policy decisions and implementation. There seems to have been no shortage of individuals, and groups, ready to express an opinion about Irish migrants but it is often unclear from Daly’s narrative to what extent these views were taken forward as part of a policy process or led to a specific policy outcome. Like O’Connor, she stresses the importance of ‘Irish Centres’, noting that this approach had been proposed in Dublin since the 1940s.⁴⁷ However, whereas O’Connor does not mention the English hierarchy in connection with Catholic initiatives for Irish migrants, Daly identifies the Archbishop of Westminster as the ‘driving force’ behind the London Irish Centre. She notes that this opened in 1955, but provides no information on the policy context for this. Irish Centres in Birmingham and Manchester were opened subsequently and Daly interprets this as ‘part of a concerted campaign by the hierarchies of England and Ireland

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.124.

⁴⁶ Mary Daly, *The Slow Failure: Population Decline and Independent Ireland, 1920-1973* (Wisconsin, 2006), pp.256-328.

⁴⁷ Daly, *The Slow Failure*, p.296.

to improve services for emigrants'. Again, no evidence for this or analysis of how this came about is offered.⁴⁸ Daly claims that the 'Catholic church was probably the only group with sufficient resources to establish and run Irish centers [sic] without government support' but does not provide any evidence for this statement, clarify whether she is referring to the Irish or the English church (or both) or demonstrate why such centres became a policy priority given other calls upon the resources of either or both hierarchies.⁴⁹

Unlike Jackson and O'Connor, whose focus was solely on initiatives in Britain, Daly also gives an account of activities in Ireland, notably the establishment of the Catholic Social Welfare Bureau in Dublin with its initial focus on supporting emigrants, particularly women and girls; and Archbishop McQuaid's lobbying of the Irish government for restrictions on the migration of unaccompanied minors and the regulation of employment agencies.⁵⁰ She charts the changing response of the Irish government from one of non-engagement with emigrant welfare concerns (on the grounds that to provide any funding would be to open the 'floodgates' of demand for more) to one of making some funding available to support bureaux in Ireland offering advisory services to intending migrants.⁵¹

Like O'Connor, Daly identifies migrants with mental health problems as particularly likely to end up as 'social casualties' in Britain, along with 'down-and-outs' and 'borstal boys'. She notes that the Easter Emigrant Congress passed a resolution at its meeting in 1964 urging the Irish and English Hierarchies to 'tackle the rehabilitation' of these groups, but she does not

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.300.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.299.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp.277-282.

⁵¹ Ibid., p.324.

provide any detail on whether this resolution achieved any traction as a policy claim with either hierarchy.⁵² She also notes that Richard Hauser, who she identifies as working for a ‘voluntary nondenominational agency that helped migrants to the United Kingdom, particularly prisoners’, approached both the Dublin Archdiocesan authorities and the industrial schools seeking to work with them to better prepare boys for life after their discharge – an offer which was rejected by McQuaid.⁵³

Daly’s account provides evidence that, within the Catholic church, interest in migrant welfare went beyond the hierarchies of England and Ireland. She notes that the Roman Curia expected the Irish hierarchy to collaborate with their English counterpart to provide for the spiritual needs of Irish migrants and was critical of previous efforts in that regard.⁵⁴ Daly describes the Archdiocese of Westminster commissioning a report on arrangements for Irish migrants in England and Wales from the Newman Demographic Survey, a Catholic social survey group, with the intention of it being presented at the International Catholic Migration Conference in 1960.⁵⁵ A section within this report, on the ‘home environment of the emigrant’ became the subject of dispute between the representatives of the Irish hierarchy and those of the Westminster Archdiocese, providing an insight into power relations between the two bodies – this will be considered in detail in the present study.⁵⁶

Enda Delaney also considers responsibility for Irish migrant welfare in his account of Irish migration to Britain between 1921 and 1971.⁵⁷ He identifies a

⁵² Ibid., p.313.

⁵³ Ibid., p.314.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.302.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 304.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp.305-306.

⁵⁷ Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, pp.1, 66-69, 134, 188-202.

consistent view within the Irish government, extending from the 1930s to the 1970s, that the ‘needs of migrants were the concern of Catholic clergy rather than Irish [government] officials.’⁵⁸ Delaney notes the existence of Irish centres in major cities in England, set up by ‘the Roman Catholic church’ in the ‘late 1950s and 1960s’ but, like the other authors discussed above, does not offer any discussion of how this came about or the respective roles of the Irish or English hierarchies.⁵⁹ He does, however, note that by the mid-1960s the Irish hierarchy was lobbying the Irish government for funding for Irish centres in England which were ‘in dire [financial] straits’.⁶⁰ Like Daly, Delaney discusses the representations made by the Irish hierarchy to the Irish government seeking restriction of migration of unaccompanied minors, a request that was declined on ‘moral, legal and practical grounds.’⁶¹

Mary Muldowney’s oral history of Irish women in the Second World War recounts the experiences of Irish women war workers in Britain but does not attempt any analysis of welfare provision for them. She briefly notes that despite widespread concerns about the ‘moral dangers’ to which young women workers might be exposed, the Catholic Social Welfare Bureau (CSWB) received no government grant ‘to support their work in Britain’. She provides no details of the work of the CSWB either in Dublin or in Britain.⁶²

The Birmingham ‘Irish Welfare Centre’ is briefly mentioned by James Moran in his account of the Irish in Birmingham from the early nineteenth-

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp.69, 258-259.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p.258.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.259.

⁶¹ Ibid., pp.258-259.

⁶² Mary Muldowney, *The Second World War and Irish Women: An Oral History* (Dublin, 2007), p.76.

century to the present day.⁶³ The Irish Welfare Centre is described as having been funded by a collection initiated by the Archbishop of Birmingham and the proceeds of a religious goods shop at the Centre. Initially focussing on support for new arrivals in finding ‘accommodation and employment’ it subsequently moved on to a scheme to help young married couples fund their own homes in the city. Moran also describes the Irish Community Centre, based on Liverpool’s Irish Centre.⁶⁴ This demonstrates that not everything described as an ‘Irish Centre’ conformed to the model of welfare provision or support funded and delivered by the Catholic church. Moran’s description indicates that both the Liverpool Irish Centre and the Birmingham Irish Community Centre were commercial members’ clubs offering events such as dinners, dances, ‘Miss Ireland in Birmingham’ pageants and folk music evenings.⁶⁵ He also describes the informal welfare work done by the voluntary Irish County Associations whose members, as well as organising social events, also visited the sick, organised charity collections and ‘opportunities for the jobless to meet prospective employers’.⁶⁶

The health experience of Irish migrants did not feature in any of the studies so far described. However, from the 1980s onwards a number of studies have been published demonstrating that Irish-born men and women in Britain have significantly worse morbidity and mortality than the British-born and that these differences remain after adjusting for socio-economic status. Marmot et al’s 1983 review of mortality among immigrant groups found that all cause male mortality in Irish immigrants was higher than that for other immigrant groups or

⁶³ James Moran, *Irish Birmingham, a History* (Liverpool, 2010).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.178-179.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.182-183.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.182.

the British-born. They hypothesised that this finding could be due to pre-existing social or health problems acting as a stimulus to migration. The higher mortality from tuberculosis in Irish immigrants was a reflection of the higher rates prevailing in Ireland.⁶⁷ Subsequent studies have repeatedly confirmed these findings and have also demonstrated the higher prevalence of mental health problems among the Irish-born. The excess of mental illness and the related high suicide rates seen in Irish men are, like the overall mortality, not explained by correcting for socio-economic status.⁶⁸ A case-control study of Irish migrants living in London found that clinical depression was associated with ‘unplanned migration’, suggesting that the illness had its roots in the immediate pre-migration phase.⁶⁹ A recent analysis of health data by Irish migrant birth cohort indicates that the greatest burden of excess ill health is experienced by those born between 1921 and 1960. These individuals have worse health and mortality outcomes than either the Irish in Ireland or the British-born. Irish migrants born subsequently are healthier than the British-born population.⁷⁰ Migrants in the 1921-1960 birth cohorts had fewer years of full-time education than either the Irish in Ireland or the British-born, with Irish male migrants having less education than females.⁷¹ Migrants, both male and female, were also significantly shorter than those in the other two groups.⁷²

Analysis of the available data did not find a positive correlation between length

⁶⁷ Michael Marmot, A. Adelstein and L. Bolusu, ‘Lessons from the study of immigrant mortality’, *The Lancet*, 323, 8392 (30 June 1984), pp.1455-7.

⁶⁸ R. Cochrane and S. Bal, ‘Mental hospital admission rates of immigrants to England, a comparison of 1971 and 1981’, *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 24 (1989), pp.2-11; G. Leavey, ‘Suicide and Irish migrants in Britain: Identity and integration’, *International Review of Psychiatry*, 11 (1999), pp.168-172.

⁶⁹ Louise Ryan, Gerard Leavey, Anne Golden, Robert Blizzard and Michael King, ‘Depression in Irish migrants living in London: case-control study’, *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 188 (2006), pp. 560-566.

⁷⁰ Delaney, Fernihough and Smith, ‘Exporting poor health’, p.9.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.15.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp.16-17.

of time in England and health outcomes, suggesting that factors influencing health had their origin prior to migration. Compared to the Irish in Ireland or the British-born, Irish migrants in the 1921 to 1960 birth cohorts were less likely to be married, more likely to be divorced or separated and, for the older age groups, more likely to be widowed. Irish migrants also had very high rates of ‘ever smoking’, with smoking initiated before emigration.⁷³ The authors concluded that the evidence supports the origins of the ill health experienced by these Irish migrants being in Ireland rather than England. They hypothesise that this could be related to high levels of abuse during childhood, either in an institutional or family setting, acting as a driver of emigration, mental health problems and stress related physical illness. It is known that a high proportion of former industrial or reformatory school children subsequently left Ireland for England – 30 per cent of those interviewed for the Ryan Commission Inquiry into Child Abuse were resident in England. Abuse was not limited to the institutional setting. A 2002 report based on telephone interviews found that 30 per cent of women and 24 per cent of men reported some form of sexual abuse in childhood. Of those reporting abuse, one third of the women and a quarter of the men felt that it had had a significant effect on their adult life.⁷⁴ Regardless of where the problems arose, those affected clearly need access to appropriate services wherever they currently are. Policy claims in this regard are now being made on behalf of the Irish in Britain through, for example, the Irish Fund of Great Britain’s ‘Forgotten Irish’ campaign.⁷⁵ The present study does not focus on the current health needs of the aging cohort of migrants but will consider

⁷³ Ibid., pp.25-26.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp.27-28.

⁷⁵ Mary Tilki, Louise Ryan, Alessio D’Angelo, Rosemary Sales, ‘The forgotten Irish: a research project commissioned by the Ireland Fund, 2009’ [consulted at: http://eprints.mdx.ac.uk/6350/1/Tilki-Forgotten_Irish.pdf (25 September 2012)].

whether there was any contemporary realisation that those migrating during the period 1940 to 1972 had any particular needs and whether any services were implemented to address them.

The existing literature, therefore, provides an overview of welfare provision for Irish migrants but leaves gaps in information about the nature of contemporaneous policy discourse, process, decisions and implementation. This is not surprising since none of the authors wrote with the objective of providing a sustained policy analysis. They do, however, provide valuable signposting and starting points for further work.

Objectives of the present study

The continuous transfer of significant numbers of people from one state to another raises questions about where responsibility for migrant welfare lies. Reflecting on the welfare issues raised by Irish migration to England, Mary Daly notes that this includes questions

about the boundaries of citizenship and the respective responsibilities of state and voluntary services. If Irish emigrants needed assistance, who should provide it – the British social services, the Irish state, or the Catholic church?⁷⁶

Implicit within Daly's questions are further questions concerning how 'needs for assistance' and the services to meet them were identified and by whom, how arguments to support the provision of services for needs were put forward as part of a policy debate, what services were, in fact, provided and with what outcomes and whether other responses, such as through legislation, were considered. Daly's use of the phrase 'Catholic church' simplifies the situation in that it assumes the two Hierarchies, English and Irish, held similar views on

⁷⁶ Mary Daly, *The Slow Failure*, p.261.

Irish migrants and their needs and addressed these in concert. In fact, the two hierarchies were separate entities operating in different territories with different public policy and social welfare frameworks and agendas. In addition, in developing policy for Irish migrants, each hierarchy needed to balance their assessment of migrant needs against competing demands to provide for the welfare of their existing population. To date, no sustained analysis of the assessment and response to Irish migrant needs by the Irish and English hierarchies and the Irish and British governments has been undertaken. This study addresses these issues by investigating the ways in which Irish migrants became identified as a category for which a policy response was claimed, by whom, or by which organisations, such claims were made, the nature and site of the policy discourse that resulted, and the responses that emerged across a range of institutions in Ireland and England to any policies devised.

The expectation is that this policy-based approach will have some utility beyond an analysis of a now historical migrant group. Currently (2012), the economic situation in Ireland, with unemployment standing at 14.3 per cent, has led, once again, to high levels of emigration.⁷⁷ In the year to April 2011, 40,200 Irish nationals left Ireland for the UK or elsewhere, a number similar to that seen in the 1950s.⁷⁸ Thus there may be lessons from past experience to apply to the current situation. In addition, Britain is currently experiencing high levels of immigration from those Central and Eastern European countries which acceded to the European Union in 2004, with 892,000 nationals of these countries

⁷⁷ Live Register, April 2012, Central Statistics Office, Dublin, 3 May 2012 [consulted at: http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/labourmarket/2012/lreg_apr2012.pdf (15 May 2012)].

⁷⁸ Population and Migration Estimates, April 2011, Central Statistics Office, Dublin, 15 September 2011 [consulted at: <http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/population/2011/Population%20and%20Migration%20Estimates%20April%202011.pdf> (15 May 2012)].

resident in the UK in June 2011.⁷⁹ Like the Irish before them, the majority of these migrants are Catholic, young and single. Again, like the Irish, they have been the subject of social investigation and associated with various social and welfare problems including poor housing conditions and overcrowding, long working hours, poor leisure or social experiences, and difficulties accessing health care or advice about employment or welfare rights.⁸⁰ The housing problems experienced by recent migrants, including poor standards of accommodation, high rents, up to six people sharing a room and sleeping in shifts, parallel conditions experienced by the Irish in the 1950s.⁸¹ The Catholic dioceses of Westminster, Southwark and Brentwood recently commissioned a report into the impact on parishes of increasing ethnic and social diversity. One Catholic agency director interviewed for that report claimed that ‘2,000 people from Central and Eastern Europe arrive at Victoria coach station every week’ – a statement which echoes those made about Irish arrivals in the 1950s.⁸² A 2007 survey of migrants themselves showed that they looked to the church to ‘help them integrate into the local society’, provide help with accommodation and employment, provide advice on legal and welfare issues and provide financial

⁷⁹ Office for National Statistics, Population by Country of Birth and Nationality July 2010-June 2011, released 23 February 2012 [consulted at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/migration1/migration-statistics-quarterly-report/february-2012/index.html> (15 May 2012)].

⁸⁰ Sarah Spencer, Martin Ruhs, Bridget Anderson and Ben Rogaly, *Migrants Lives Beyond the Workplace: The Experiences of Central and East Europeans in the UK, a report for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation* (York, 2007) [consulted at: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/2045-migrants-experiences-uk.pdf> (15 May 2012)].

⁸¹ Ibid., pp.38-42; Francis Davis, Jolanta Stankeviciute, David Ebutt, et al, *The Ground of Justice: Report of a Pastoral Research Enquiry into the Needs of Migrants in London's Catholic Community* (Cambridge, 2007), section 4.2.1, pp.23-24 [consulted at: <http://www.rcdow.org.uk/fileupload/upload/FinalvonHugelreport152200781537.pdf> (accessed 15 May 2012)]; Daly, *The Slow Failure*, pp.270-272.

⁸² Davis, Stankeviciute, Ebutt, et al, *The Ground of Justice*, section 2.1, p.10 [consulted at: <http://www.rcdow.org.uk/fileupload/upload/FinalvonHugelreport152200781537.pdf> (15 May 2012)].

assistance in emergencies/crises.⁸³ Slough, where a large influx of Irish migrants led to pressure on housing supply in the 1960s, now has problems with homelessness amongst recent East European migrants.⁸⁴ These issues are remarkably similar to those associated with Irish migrants in the mid-twentieth century and again, there are transferable lessons from experience with the Irish to the current migrant groups. Looking at the problems associated with current new migrant groups – difficulty finding housing or employment, being unable to afford satisfying leisure activities and so on, raises a question that was occasionally voiced in connection with the Irish in the 1950s and 1960s, namely are these problems confined to specific new immigrant groups or do they affect the already resident population (or certain sub-groups within it) to a similar or even greater extent? That is, does associating a problem with a specific group focus the solutions proposed and offered on that group, potentially disadvantaging others who may be experiencing very similar difficulties?⁸⁵ This study discusses the debates around the welfare needs of Irish migrants that went on particularly within the English Catholic church in relation to specific provision for them (including Irish Centres) and addresses an aspect of Irish migration that has not been researched previously.

Research Questions

When large numbers of people migrate across state boundaries, where does responsibility for their social, spiritual and physical welfare lie? Does

⁸³ Ibid., section 6.2, p.32

⁸⁴ 'Bleak House – where do migrant workers live in a crowded, post-recession town?' *The Economist*, 7 October 2010 [consulted at: <http://www.economist.com/node/17209552> (28 July 2012)].

⁸⁵ Michael P Fogarty, 'The Irish immigrant', *The Christian Democrat*, July-August 1960, pp.309-315.

responsibility pass to the state to which they move and its institutions or does some responsibility remain with the home state? Should migrants be expected to integrate into the society to which they move and access services there on the same terms as the indigenous population or does the receiving state, including its voluntary organisations, have a responsibility to provide additional services to meet specific perceived needs? If the latter, how should they be resourced? Should the provision of migrant group-specific services be permanent – designed to encourage the maintenance of separation between the migrants and host society, or should it be transitional – designed to act as a bridge to integration? How do issues related to migrant experience become formulated as problems, by whom and with what intentions?

The secondary literature indicates that Irish migrants were not invisible in British society. Rather, they were perceived as having specific spiritual, moral and welfare needs by a variety of agencies in both Britain and Ireland. The secondary literature provides a broad chronological outline of some of the initiatives developed in response to perceived migrant need. It is, however, incomplete, some of the accounts are conflicting, and it gives more information on what was done than on how and why this was so or what outcomes resulted. The extent to which individual agencies were able to act alone or needed to agree ways of working with other agencies is also currently unclear. Similarly, the extent to which the initiatives described in the literature were the result of high-level policy directives or resulted from the actions of individuals working at operational level outside a formal policy framework, is also unclear. The secondary literature raises questions about the way initiatives set up by the Irish hierarchy, such as the emigrant chaplain scheme mentioned by Jackson,

O'Connor and Daly, were delivered and managed in England. This must have required collaboration and co-operation with the English hierarchy but this is so far unexplored.

This study provides a systematic and sustained analysis of initiatives for Irish migrants that goes beyond chronology and narrative to analyse why these initiatives developed as they did. This analysis contributes to our understanding of the determinants of social policy and how these have changed over time. It is of wider relevance to migration studies, as it addresses policy development and welfare provision across national borders and includes the role of non-statutory organisations as well as the statutory bodies usually included in discussions of public policy. The role of non-statutory organisations is particularly relevant at the present time of debate around the government's 'Big Society' project with its objective of increasing the participation of the charitable sector in the provision of welfare services.⁸⁶

Sources

A wide range of primary sources concerning policy debates and decisions taken with reference to the Irish as a distinct group have formed the basis of this study. These include governmental records in Ireland and Britain; Catholic diocesan archives across Ireland and Britain; and records of Catholic and secular voluntary agencies in Ireland and Britain. Dr John Charles McQuaid, Archbishop of Dublin, (appointed November 1940, resigned December 1971, retired February 1972) provided leadership on migrant issues to the Irish

⁸⁶ Public Administration Committee – 902-I, *Seventeenth Report: The Big Society, Conclusions and Recommendations*, 14 December 2011 [consulted at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmpubadm/902/90202.htm> (30 July 2012)].

hierarchy and in England, the dioceses of Westminster and Birmingham had a particular interest in or involvement with the Irish due to the high levels of Irish migration to these areas.⁸⁷ Westminster and Birmingham are also the two English dioceses that feature most strongly in the Dublin Diocesan papers. For these reasons, the Diocesan Archives of Dublin, Westminster and Birmingham have been used as the major sources for Catholic church responses to migrants in Ireland and England. The Dublin Diocesan Archive (DDA) also holds the records of the Catholic Social Welfare Bureau and records relating to the Legion of Mary, which provided volunteers to deliver much of the bureau's work. At the time this research was undertaken, records subsequent to the retirement of Archbishop McQuaid in 1972 held by the DDA were not open for research. For this reason, and because McQuaid was pre-eminent in leading and overseeing work for Irish migrants, the dates of his episcopate (1940 to 1972) have been used as the timeframe for this study. The National Archives in both Ireland and Britain have been used as the source of material on government responses, including dialogue with the Catholic hierarchies and relevant legislation. This approach has enabled not only the identification of issues related to Irish migrants within individual organisations but also allowed for the cross-linking of issues where there was at least some degree of collaboration between and among organisations, something which has not been attempted in previous studies. This sheds some light on the inter-organisational dynamics behind policy development.

⁸⁷ Dates of McQuaid's episcopacy taken from Archdiocese of Dublin: Archdiocese Overview [consulted at: <http://www.dublindiocese.ie/content/archdiocese-overview> (30 September 2012)]

Methods

This study presents a narrative of the actions taken by the main institutions identified as having an interest in Irish migrants, that is, the Irish and English hierarchies and the Irish and British governments, and an analysis of why those actions were chosen, out of possible alternatives, and any developments that followed. The methodology is drawn from the theory and practice of policy analysis, an inter-disciplinary sub-field of political science, which seeks to understand how particular issues are either included or excluded from the political agenda, who designs the resulting policies and how they are implemented.⁸⁸ Rudolf Klein and Theodore Marmor offer a definition of public policy as ‘what Governments do and neglect to do. It is about politics, resolving (or at least attenuating) conflicts about resources, rights and values.’⁸⁹ Whilst this definition, and the remit of policy analysis generally, focuses on public or government policy, there is no reason why a similar analytical framework should not be applied to the way other institutions (in this instance particularly the Catholic hierarchies) decide what to do, and this approach is adopted in the present study.

Klein and Marmor acknowledge that policy makers are driven by their ‘assumptive worlds’, that is the ‘mental models’ through which they understand the causes of the problems wish to address.⁹⁰ In his study on the role of discourse in the construction of ‘acid rain’ as a political issue, Maarten Hajar notes that ‘dead trees’ are not a category for which policy claims are made,

⁸⁸ John Hudson and Stuart Lowe, *Understanding the Policy Process: Analysing Welfare Policy and Practice* (Bristol, 2004).

⁸⁹ Rudolf Klein and Theodore R. Marmor, ‘Reflections on policy analysis: Putting it together again’, in and Michael Moran, Robert E. Goodin and Martin Rein (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Public Policy*, (Oxford, 2008), p.852.

⁹⁰ Klein and Marmor, *Reflections on Policy Analysis*, pp.852-853.

simply by virtue of their existence. It is only through the narratives in which they are discussed and made sense of that they become a political problem. In this example, it is identifying 'dead trees' as 'victims of pollution' within an 'acid rain narrative' that make them a target for action.⁹¹ Narratives are socially constructed and emerge from the normative beliefs and practices of the groups producing them, although these may not be explicit in the narratives. Thus a key part of this study has been to identify the narratives through which Irish migrants were constructed as a problem category requiring a policy response and to consider the extent to which the culture and values of the particular organisation making the claim has shaped the narrative and response.

The construction of narratives around Irish migrants and their needs is not enough, of itself, to constitute either a policy claim or to generate a policy response. To achieve this, the narratives need to lead to a clear call for specific action and gain a hearing on the agenda of an appropriate decision making body. Matthew Crenson's case study of the way a large steel manufacturer kept air pollution off the policy agenda in one American town demonstrates how organisations with a reputation for power can prevent issues unwelcome to them from being raised.⁹² In the present study, evidence of exclusion of unwelcome issues was found and provides insight into power relations between the different organisations or personalities involved. An example that will be considered is the interaction between Monsignor Cecil Barratt of the Catholic Social Welfare Bureau in Dublin (acting with the full support of the Archbishop) and the Newman Demographic Survey (NDS), an English statistical and social research

⁹¹ Maarten A. Hajer, 'Discourse coalitions and the institutionalization of practice: The case of acid rain in Britain', in Frank Fischer and John Forester (eds.), *The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis and Planning* (Durham and London, 1993), p.44.

⁹² See discussion in Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp.44-49.

group, and Westminster diocesan officials over a study on Irish migrant welfare needs produced by the NDS for presentation at an international Catholic conference, which Barratt and McQuaid succeeded in suppressing.

Policy analysis theory offers two ‘model frameworks’ against which examples of policy processes can be analysed. These are Harold Lasswell’s ‘ideal’ framework and Charles Lindblom’s ‘muddling through’ model. In the ‘ideal’ situation, policy decisions are taken as part of a consistent, transparent, cyclical process involving assessment of the problem, promotion as a policy issue, prescription of what should be done, innovation of a policy, implementation of the policy in practice, termination of the policy when the problem is solved and, finally, appraisal of the impact and consideration of future options. In contrast, the ‘muddling through’ model sees policy making as a process of gradual change and accretion in which formal assessment of need, options or outcomes is often lacking.⁹³ This study will attempt to appraise where in the spectrum between these two alternatives welfare policy for Irish migrants fell.

Overview

The study starts with an account of the Irish Catholic hierarchy’s response to Irish migrants. The appointment of John Charles McQuaid to the Dublin Archdiocese at a time when the administrative requirements of the British government made Dublin the sole point of embarkation for Irish men and women leaving to work in Britain marked a clear shift in the hierarchy’s

⁹³ See discussion in Hudson and Lowe, *Understanding the Policy Process*, pp.5-6.

approach to the welfare of Irish migrants.⁹⁴ Previously the involvement of Irish clergy had been *ad hoc* and reactive. McQuaid's aim of improving the administration of social welfare in Dublin found an early focus in organising services for migrants to mainland Britain who found themselves in Dublin awaiting embarkation. Chapter one discusses the emerging policy framework for Irish migrants under McQuaid's leadership. The influence of pre-war concerns regarding the moral welfare of lone female migrants was evident in his establishment of the Catholic Social Welfare Bureau (CSWB) with its initial focus on emigrant welfare, particularly that of women and girls. From the start, McQuaid's vision for the care and support of migrants was based on the preservation of Catholic belief and practice as the means of preventing social and moral welfare problems. Initially, the CSWB aimed to safeguard moral welfare during the time that migrants were held up in Dublin awaiting departure to Britain, through befriending at the point of arrival and advising on suitable accommodation. Migrants' names and intended destinations were recorded and passed to local parishes in England in the belief that this would enable English priests to contact new arrivals and draw them in to parish life. Once wartime travel restrictions were removed, Dublin was no longer the sole port of departure and could no longer claim a unique role in supporting migrants at this stage of their journey. By this time McQuaid was also aware that only a small proportion of migrants were being identified by the CSWB and that English parishes lacked resources to contact them. The 1950s saw a re-evaluation of the approach to migrant needs which included the establishment of the Episcopal Committee for the Care of Emigrants, as a high-level strategic body to oversee

⁹⁴ A.V. Judges, *Irish Labour in Great Britain, 1939-1945*, Official Histories (Civil) Manpower Section. Cabinet Papers, PRO/CAB102/398, The National Archives (hereafter TNA), pp. 39, 44-45.

services for emigrants and liaise with the English hierarchy. By the mid-1950s, McQuaid had in place a number of administrative arrangements to deliver pastoral support by Irish priests to Irish migrants in Britain. Chapter 2 looks at these initiatives in more detail, considers how they were implemented in practice and attempts to evaluate the results. This section includes discussion of the work of Father Eamon Casey who was seconded from Limerick to Slough in the early 1960s to work with Irish migrants. Casey stands out amongst those working with Irish migrants in that his interpretation of their welfare needs went beyond support for religious practice. His argument that inadequate housing was a causal factor in drift from religion enabled him to develop and deliver a strategy to improve access to suitable accommodation, particularly for young married couples, whilst working within the policy framework of the Irish hierarchy. His work took him beyond both Slough and the Catholic community through his work for the Catholic Housing Aid Society (CHAS) and Shelter. Casey noted that those emigrants most at risk in Britain were those least equipped for migration – the poorly educated and unskilled who left for England with no plans for work or accommodation and no money. His attempt to set up a network of bureaux across Irish parishes to encourage ‘responsible migration’ was seen by McQuaid as a challenge to the primacy of the CSWB, as will be discussed.

Whereas McQuaid’s response to the problems experienced by Irish migrants was to establish an administrative framework through which initiatives to safeguard religious belief and practice could be delivered, the English hierarchy’s response was largely one of denial that there were any particular problems. Chapter three discusses the formal policy response of the English

hierarchy, considers the ways in which the English hierarchy worked with their Irish counterparts on the initiatives discussed in the preceding chapters and looks at initiatives for the Irish which had their origins in the English church.

The formal position of the English hierarchy was that Irish migration was not new and that no specific policy initiatives were needed to respond to it. The English hierarchy's response to the Irish initiatives was largely passive, secondments of Irish priests to work in English parishes were the responsibility of individual bishops. Where space could be found for them in presbyteries, their help was often welcomed although lack of clarity about their role frequently led to disagreements with parish clergy. Initiatives such as the annual Irish missions and recruitment to the Legion of Mary were also given passive support, on the understanding that their aim was to facilitate the integration of Irish migrants into English parishes and not the establishment of parallel provision specifically for them.

This study demonstrates that the establishment of Irish Centres was not a policy objective of either the English or Irish hierarchies. Initiatives to set up such centres arose in many English towns with large numbers of Irish immigrants and the proposals emerged from different quarters in each. A detailed analysis of the establishment of the London and Birmingham Centres (which followed different models) will be presented. Although these arose and developed in different ways, the lack of fit with any overall policy and the resultant lack of clear objectives or adequate resourcing resulted in difficulties that will be discussed.

For most of the period under consideration, the Irish government was willing to discuss migrant welfare needs when requested to do so by the Irish hierarchy,

usually through McQuaid. Chapter four discusses the extent to which the governments in both countries engaged with Irish migrants either through legislation or public policy. Successive Irish governments declined to use legal mechanisms to restrict emigration or regulate recruitment in Ireland by British employers on the grounds that this would either infringe the rights of individuals and families or was both unnecessary and unenforceable. A formal policy position of not providing funding for migrant welfare in Britain was reached and attempts to encourage the development of Irish organisations in Britain to support those in difficulties through the establishment of a trust fund based on voluntary contributions came to nothing. The British government neatly finessed the question of any specific welfare provision for Irish migrants by defining them through legislation as ‘not foreign’ and entitling them to benefits, health and welfare services on the same basis as the indigenous population.

Chapter five sets Irish migration to Britain within the context of policy debates on migration in the international Catholic church and discusses surveys on Irish migrant needs undertaken by the CSWB, Newman Demographic Survey and Richard Hauser of the Centre for Policy Studies. Both the CSWB report and that by the NDS were produced for presentation at conferences organised by the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), a body that had the imprimatur of the Vatican. The ICMC view of emigration was based on long distance permanent resettlement for which they advocated pre-emigration preparation by Catholic agencies in sending countries and the provision of priests of similar national, cultural and linguistic background as the emigrants, to establish new parishes and support emigrants at their destinations. The CSWB report, written in 1954, argued that this model was not applicable to Irish

migration to Britain. The NDS report was commissioned in 1960 by the ICMC to assess the needs of Irish migrants in Britain, examine existing services for them and make recommendations for the future. The report acknowledged the lack of any detailed work on the nature and origins of problems experienced by Irish migrants but drew on published, largely anecdotal, accounts to demonstrate current understanding. The report, and its methodology, was unacceptable to McQuaid who, through the CSWB, blocked its presentation to the ICMC conference. The final report by Richard Hauser, an independent sociologist, drew attention to the number of Irish migrants within the criminal justice system in England. His attempts to work with Irish authorities to improve preparation for migration did not progress due, at least in part, to unwillingness on the part of McQuaid and the CSWB to work with non-Catholic agencies. These reports are of interest, therefore, not only for their content but for the reactions they elicited and the power relations between the various parties.

Chapter six focuses on the extent to which Irish female migrants and their welfare needs were seen as requiring a particular response from any of the institutions included in the study (Irish and English churches, British and Irish governments). The rationale for looking at female migrants as a separate group is that, in establishing the CSWB, McQuaid specifically made the care of women and girls its first priority. It therefore seems appropriate to review the extent to which this objective was met in practice and whether it was shared by institutions other than the Irish Catholic church. McQuaid's identification of females as requiring special care was based on approaches during the 1930s from the Archbishop of Westminster and British secular agencies to the Irish hierarchy and the Irish government raising concerns about illegitimate

pregnancy and human trafficking (white slavery) to which they felt young Irish women travelling alone were particularly at risk. The phrase used by McQuaid in setting the objective of ‘care for women and girls’ for the CSWB was part of the contemporary vocabulary through which moral welfare organisations described the range of prevention, protection and rescue work they undertook. The CSWB adopted methods established by existing moral welfare agencies, including the secular Travellers’ Aid Society. However, the CSWB extended these services to men as well as women and added a religious dimension in that ensuring continuance of religious belief and practice, rather than safeguarding female moral welfare, became the primary objective. Thus the work of the CSWB did not have a specific dimension in respect of care for female emigrants. In England, the initiatives set up by the Irish hierarchy were not specifically targeted at females. Risks to female moral welfare were sometimes identified through them; for example, Irish girls cohabiting or engaged in prostitution, but no specific services resulted. In general, despite McQuaid’s prioritisation of ‘women and girls’, the majority of services were provided for both males and females. The exception was the approach to single pregnant Irish women presenting to services in England. The services offered to them varied widely across England but some English voluntary moral welfare organisations pursued a vigorous policy of repatriation of these women to Irish services which at times appears to have been coercive and based on a misinterpretation of the entitlement of these women to services in England.

Finally, the conclusion presents a synopsis of the policy approaches followed by the Irish and English hierarchies and the Irish and British governments in respect of Irish migrants. All four institutions were aware of

Irish migrants as a potential source of policy claims. However, the narratives through which these claims were presented were often unfocussed and largely unsuccessful in gaining a place on policy agendas. The Irish government effectively rejected claims for specific policy or resources for migrant needs whilst the British government finessed any specific claims through legislation allowing the Irish access to services and benefits on a similar basis to British citizens. The English hierarchy supported initiatives for the Irish so long as they were intended to facilitate integration into English parishes. The Irish hierarchy, led by McQuaid, responded with a series of initiatives to support continuance of religious belief and practice. McQuaid succeeded in cutting through the lack of clarity in the narratives of Irish migrant need by framing the discourse as one of ‘faith and morals’. This avoided the need for any further discussion or assessment of need and enabled a response that was affordable, feasible, in line with the expectations of the Vatican and the church’s own understanding of migrant need. Gaps in the current study and areas where future work would be appropriate are considered.

Chapter 1: ‘Catering for our emigrants’¹ – the Irish Catholic church’s evolving responses to emigrant need, 1940-1972.

Introduction

The development of proactive policy to support Irish migrants to Britain dates from the 1940s and can be attributed to the strategic leadership of Archbishop John Charles McQuaid. This chapter will consider the reasons for McQuaid’s prioritisation of migrant welfare, the services implemented, and the development of policy over time. McQuaid’s approach to migrant welfare reflected his background as an administrator with no experience, prior to his appointment to Dublin, of parochial or social welfare work.² As a result, he tended to focus on administrative structures rather than strategic policy objectives. He favoured established approaches to moral welfare work and pastoral care including provision of ‘information bureaux’; befriending of single travellers at points of embarkation and debarkation; and maintenance of religious belief and practice through parish-based activities. He was not innovative in his choice of such services but he established a system that could deliver them, in England as well as Ireland, within the available resources and this proved remarkably durable. At the time of his appointment to Dublin, the Irish hierarchy response to migrant need was reactive, piecemeal and *ad hoc*. By the late 1950s, McQuaid had established a range of services for Irish migrants in Ireland and England, with the agreement of the English hierarchy and with clear reporting to the Irish hierarchy, which proved sustainable over several decades and which, in some cases, continue in modified form to the current time. McQuaid stands out as the

¹ H.J.A. Gray, ‘Catering for our emigrants’, *Christus Rex*, January 1955, pp.11-22.

² Roland Burke Savage, ‘The Church in Dublin: 1940-1965’, *Studies, An Irish Quarterly Review*, 54 (1965), pp.296-346.

strategic leader of policy development and implementation for Irish migrants. However, the broad remit of the policy objectives he established provided opportunity for others with the necessary leadership and policy skills to determine needs and implement responses, starting from small-scale work at parish level. Here, Father Eamon Casey and his work on housing and ‘responsible migration’ stands out. Working with Irish migrants in Slough, he realised that one solution to problems with accommodation was to help them manage their finances, arrange a mortgage and buy a property. He took this approach from being a local initiative to a national one, which was not limited to Catholics, or the Irish. To help migrants arriving in London with no employment arranged, he set up an employment agency, run by an experienced human resources manager, funded by fees from employers. These initiatives will be discussed in Chapter 2.

Background

There had been appreciable emigration to mainland Britain before McQuaid was appointed to Dublin and his initial assessment of the situation was shaped by issues identified in the two preceding decades. The imposition of restrictions on immigration by the United States in 1924 meant that, from the early 1920s onwards, mainland Britain became the main destination for Irish migrants.³ Concerns about the welfare of migrants were being voiced from this time, particularly regarding the moral dangers which travelling alone could pose for young, single female emigrants. The Port and Station Work Society of Liverpool, a voluntary vigilance society seeking to prevent human trafficking,

³ Daly, *The Slow Failure*, pp.140-141.

was providing support to young Irish female emigrants disembarking in Liverpool by the late 1920s. The response of the Irish hierarchy was largely reactive. Sunday Mass was used as an opportunity to draw attention to the risks of young girls being lured into prostitution in England through bogus recruitment agencies and intending emigrants were advised to discuss any job advertisements with their parish priest before applying.⁴

Throughout the 1930s, there was a growing recognition in England of the number of pregnant single women arriving from Ireland and seeking support from English voluntary and local government organisations.⁵ This issue stood out as a significant problem for a number of reasons. Catholic welfare organisations from which these women often sought help, or to which they were referred by local council maternity services, did not have capacity for them in their mother and baby homes. Local council welfare officers considered that providing for them within publicly funded homes was inappropriate since young Irish women on their ‘first fall’ would come under the malign influence of ‘repeat offenders’. There was also a view prevalent amongst welfare officers that Irish women should not be entitled to use English services. The reason so many attempted to do so was a reflection of the way in which single pregnant women were treated in Ireland at the time. Carol Smart and Bronwen Walter have both argued that the ‘flight’ of pregnant single women from Ireland should be seen as an example of social exclusion acting as a driver for emigration.⁶ Such women were voting with their feet to avoid the services on offer to them in Ireland, through church-run mother and baby homes. Mothers admitted to these

⁴ Daly, *The Slow Failure*, p.277.

⁵ Paul Michael Garrett, *Social Work and Irish People in Britain: Historical and contemporary responses to Irish children and families* (Bristol, 2004), pp.28-29; Daly, *The Slow Failure*, pp.285.

⁶ Garrett, *Social Work and Irish People in Britain*, pp.21-22.

were expected to remain for two years, undergoing a programme of moral reform, before discharge to suitable employment whilst their babies were boarded out with foster parents.⁷

In 1938, Cardinal Hinsley, Archbishop of Westminster, approached the Irish government and hierarchy in response to the large number of pregnant single females from Ireland requesting help from Westminster diocesan services. These included not only those whose pregnancies had been conceived in Ireland but also a greater number who had become pregnant since arrival. Around 300 Irish women per year were presenting to the Westminster Crusade of Rescue. This represented two thirds of their caseload and exhausted the capacity of the diocesan social workers and mother and baby homes. Cardinal Hinsley presented the problem as one of ‘Womans [sic] Moral Welfare’ within the context of high levels of migration of young Irish men and women into London and South England. A lengthy correspondence between the Archbishop, the Taoiseach’s Office, the Local Government Board and the Irish Bishops’ Conference ensued.⁸ Hinsley’s preferred response to the problem of pregnant, single Irish women presenting to services in London was to ensure their rapid repatriation to Ireland and their further care within Irish facilities at Irish expense. He proposed that the Irish government should fund a social worker, to be based at the London Embassy, who could provide support not only to pregnant single Irish women but also to ‘virtuous Irish girls’ who became stranded in London without employment or funds and were, as a result, at risk of

⁷ Garrett, *Social Work and Irish People in Britain*, p.21.

⁸ Memorandum of correspondence relating to the welfare of Irish Catholic girls who take up service in England, Letter from Cardinal Hinsley to Mr de Valera, 25 May 1939. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants’ Welfare 1, 1939/1961, General Correspondence, AB8/B/XXIX/a/1, Dublin Diocesan Archive [hereafter DDA].

drifting into prostitution – or vulnerable to ‘white slavers’ as Hinsley expressed it. Hinsley’s concerns did not extend beyond his own diocese; he made no representations on behalf of other areas in England and did not indicate whether similar problems were occurring in other areas of high Irish immigration. From the Irish government he sought funding – for a social worker and also for the care in London mother and baby homes of Irish women who declined repatriation. From the Irish Bishops’ Conference, he requested better co-operation between the Westminster Crusade of Rescue and the Catholic Protection and Rescue Society of Ireland (CPRSI), based in Dublin.⁹

Neither the Irish government nor the Irish hierarchy challenged Hinsley’s interpretation of these issues as an Irish problem. The government assessed the problems identified by Hinsley as ones of moral welfare, which should fall within the remit of the Catholic voluntary sector rather than require any state funding or provision. The government suggested to the Bishops’ Conference that they should consider establishing a ‘committee for social work for women and girls’ similar to the Catholic Committee for Moral Welfare Work with Women and Girls which had been set up in Westminster.¹⁰ Whilst in part this may have been motivated by a desire to avoid a charge on the exchequer, it was also fully in line with Catholic social teaching and the expectation of the church herself that the delivery of social care would be under her auspices. The Irish Bishops supported government funding towards repatriation of women emigrants wishing to return and proposed that to facilitate this work an Emigration Bureau should be established in Dublin and a social worker be attached to the staff of the High Commissioner in London. They asked the

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Letter from Local Government Board to Cardinal MacRory, 6 August 1939. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants’ Welfare 1, 1939/1961, General Correspondence, AB8/B/XXIX/a/1, DDA.

government to establish a registration scheme for employment agencies recruiting for British employers. The request for more active co-operation from the CPRSI was passed on to that organisation.¹¹

A small amount of funding was made available through the Local Government Board to support repatriation but there appears to have been little improvement in co-ordination between the Westminster Crusade of Rescue and the CPRSI. By 1941 the CPRSI was struggling to cope with the number of women being repatriated by the Westminster Crusade of Rescue. As a result, a social worker in Westminster started to refer girls to another charitable organisation in Dublin, the St. Patrick's Guild. This was done without any consultation, resulting in the Guild seeking funding from the Local Government Board. The Local Government Inspector was unable to provide any further funding and observed that 'it will not be possible to avoid over-lapping and lack of co-operation until some progress has been made ...[in the] amalgamation of the different societies interested in such work.'¹² Funding for a social worker attached to the High Commission was not forthcoming. The interchange between the Archbishop of Westminster and the Irish hierarchy and government followed a pattern that was to be repeated over issues of emigrant welfare over the succeeding years. That is, those being called upon to provide an active response to a problem that had been raised, in this case the Irish hierarchy and government, acknowledged and accepted the problem, gave the proposed solution consideration and possibly took some small measures around it. These

¹¹ Letter to Mr Hurson, Local Government Board, from J. Kinane, Bishop of Waterford and Lismore, Secretary to the Bishops' Conference, undated. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 1, 1939/61, General Correspondence, AB8/B/XXIX/a/1, DDA.

¹² Local Government Inspector to Miss Cruice, Honorary Secretary, St. Patrick's Guild, 3 March 1941. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 1, 1939/61, General Correspondence, AB8/B/XXIX/a/1, DDA.

measures, as in this case, were often not fully thought out and/or only partially implemented. Often the initiatives were allowed to wither on the vine due to lack of funding or, more importantly, lack of strategic leadership to drive them forward. However, sufficient acknowledgement was usually made to satisfy all parties such that, if the problems were not resolved, at least some action had resulted. Thus, at the time of McQuaid's appointment, the main focus of concern regarding Irish migration was on a specific group, single, pregnant women. McQuaid's assessment of migrant needs was much broader and saw single pregnancy as only one of a number of 'moral problems' related to migration.

The inefficiencies resulting from over-lapping and poor co-operation between voluntary agencies, discussed above in relation to services for single mothers, were, in fact, well known to those working in social care in Dublin. John Cooney states that from his inauguration, McQuaid had wished to establish a social welfare organisation to co-ordinate the needs of Irish emigrants. However, discussion with those working in social welfare persuaded him that the needs of Dublin's poor should have first priority. It was this realisation that drove the inauguration of the Catholic Social Services Conference (CSSC) by McQuaid soon after his appointment to the Archdiocese of Dublin in December 1940. The aim of the CSSC was to maximise the ability of Catholic educational, social and medical services to respond to the worsening conditions brought about by the Emergency through the improvement of co-ordination between them.¹³ Having established the CSSC, McQuaid turned his attention to emigration.

¹³ John Cooney, *John Charles McQuaid, Ruler of Catholic Ireland* (Dublin, 1999), pp.135-6.

Impact of World War II on Emigration – Establishment of the Catholic Social Welfare Bureau (Emigrant Section)

Emigration had been running at an annual average level of 22,000 between 1926 and 1938. The years 1939-1940 were ones of net inward migration, as many people returned home on the eve of the war. Thereafter, emigration rose sharply to 33,000 in 1941 and 46,000 in 1942.¹⁴ The major driver of emigration was the demand for labour in Britain's expanding war industries. Unlike pre-war migration, all those leaving for Britain now had to pass through Dublin. In 1940, against a background of rising concern about possible invasion, the British Government imposed a requirement for all travellers from Ireland to the United Kingdom to be in possession of a travel permit.¹⁵ As fear of invasion receded, the requirement was kept in place since it provided a means of selecting the most suitable workers for the munitions industry whilst excluding the less suitable. Both the British Government Permit Office and Labour Office (through which recruitment to the munitions industry was organised) were in Dublin.¹⁶ Throughout the war years, Dublin was the port of embarkation for nearly all migrants from Ireland, including all those recruited through Ministry

¹⁴ Table 2.5: Annual Estimates of Net Migration 1926-1987, *The Economic and Social Implications of Migration*, p.55.

¹⁵ In addition, from the outbreak of war in September 1939, the British Government required travellers from Ireland to Britain to have an identity card. The Department of External Affairs administered a scheme for the issue of identity cards to all intending travellers through local Garda Síochána stations. Confusingly, these were also often referred to as 'travel permits'. These cards were required for all persons over the age of 16 travelling alone. Persons aged up to 22 did not require an individual permit if travelling with older family members. See Letter from G. Boland, Department of External Affairs, to McQuaid, 8 July 1941. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 1, 1939/61, General Correspondence, AB8/B/XXIX/a/1, DDA.

¹⁶ A.V. Judges, *Irish Labour in Great Britain, 1939-1945*, Official Histories (Civil) Manpower Section, p.3. CAB102/398, TNA.

of Labour group schemes.¹⁷ Intending migrants were often held up there whilst administrative arrangements were finalised, including, for those recruited on group schemes to war industries, the compulsory medical examination and delousing.¹⁸ Overnight accommodation for those recruited through the Ministry of Labour was arranged in transit hostels.¹⁹ Those seeking or with employment arranged outside a formal scheme often had no accommodation and lacked the money for a hotel room. The large numbers who ended up sleeping at bus and train stations made the problem very evident.

It was against this background that McQuaid was finally able to prioritise the needs of emigrants which he addressed through the establishment of the Catholic Social Welfare Bureau (CSWB) in June 1942.²⁰ McQuaid's plans for the CSWB went beyond supporting emigrants. Following the establishment of the CSSC, McQuaid wished to establish a bureau to co-ordinate the various welfare activities undertaken by the individual organisations represented on the CSSC. The CSSC existed as a committee only and McQuaid saw a need for administrative oversight and input if any real change to the delivery of services was to be achieved. McQuaid's thinking on this was strongly influenced by Mrs Frances Moore, a social work graduate of Columbia University, who had experience of New York social services. Now married to Professor Henry Moore, an eminent physician, and living in Dublin, she and her husband were personal friends of McQuaid. In February 1942 she published a letter in the *Irish Times* which argued that the finite resources available for public assistance

¹⁷ Ibid., pp.39, 44. The Dublin-Holyhead ferry was the only route operating regularly throughout the war from Ireland. Ferries also operated on the Belfast-Liverpool, Belfast-Glasgow, Belfast-Heysham and Larne-Stranraer routes.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.44.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp.44-45.

²⁰ Cooney, *John Charles McQuaid*, pp.135-136, 148-149; Daly, *The Slow Failure*, p.277.

would be best used if there were a mechanism to prevent ‘the overlapping of those existing charitable organisations which are not now co-operative in any organised sense.’ She commended the US model of ‘a central bureau of registration consisting of a card-index system, a telephone and a worker to manipulate both [funded] by a trifling contribution from each society using it.’ This would enable organisations to check the background of new applicants for charity to see if they were already registered with other societies. If they were not, the organisation would register them. If they were, the organisation would liaise with the others with which the applicant was already registered and a joint strategy for working with that individual would be agreed. This would prevent individuals obtaining multiple handouts from different charities and improve the effectiveness of resource distribution by the member charities.²¹ McQuaid was impressed by Mrs Moore’s arguments and sought to apply them to the development of the CSWB.²² The model proposed by Mrs Moore, although based on her experience in New York, was similar to that developed by the Charity Organisation Society, founded in 1869 in London.²³

McQuaid inaugurated the Catholic Social Welfare Bureau on 17th June 1942. It consisted of a small staff: a Director, the Very Reverend J. W. Turley, and a Secretary, Mr H. J.A. Gray, a trained social worker, operating from office premises in Westland Row, Dublin. The bureau was under a ‘committee of management’ whose members included Frank Duff, founder of the Legion of Mary; J.P. Lorcan Murphy, president of the Council of Ireland St. Vincent de

²¹ Mrs Frances Moore, Letter to the Editor, *Irish Times*, 24 February, 1942. McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XIX/1a, DDA.

²² Autograph draft of note from McQuaid to Professor Moore (undated). McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XIX/1a, DDA.

²³ David Englander and Rosemary O’Day, ‘Introduction’, in David Englander and Rosemary O’Day (eds.), *Retrieved Riches: Social Investigation in Britain 1840-1914* (Aldershot, 1998), pp.12-15.

Paul Societies; and Owen Curley, president of the CSSC. The inaugural meeting was also attended by Joseph S. Walshe, Secretary to the Department of External Affairs and Thomas Leyland, Chief Welfare Officer at the British Ministry of Labour office in Dublin. The work of the bureau was to be delivered by volunteers from ‘a specially picked praesidium of the Legion of Mary’. The Legion of Mary was founded by Duff in Dublin in 1921 with the purpose of deepening devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary in its members through ‘imitation of her [the Blessed Virgin’s] virtues and complete dependence on her’. The development of individual spirituality through Marian devotion in the members was linked to evangelization and the carrying out of spiritual and welfare work to meet needs identified in the parishes in which branches of the Legion (known as praesidia) were established.²⁴ McQuaid had asked the Legion of Mary to deliver the work of the bureau not only on the grounds of their strong religious commitment but also because the Legion had a reputation for effective management of its volunteers and was sufficiently well established to offer long term input to the CSWB work.²⁵ What he did not say at the inaugural meeting was that as a voluntary body, there would be no cost to be met for the activities of Legion members.

The long-term strategic objective of the CSWB was to support a citywide ‘network of divine charity’. However, there were no financial resources to support this and it depended solely on voluntary activity. For this reason, McQuaid stressed that development should be gradual and should start with ‘the care of emigrants, especially women and girls’. The objectives that McQuaid

²⁴ R. M. Charest, *Jesus Living in Mary: Handbook of the Spirituality of St. Louis de Montfort, Legion of Mary* (Connecticut, 1994), p.1 [consulted at: www.ewtn.com/library/Montfort/Handbook/Legion.htm (2 November 2008)].

²⁵ Archbishop McQuaid, autograph speech on the inauguration of the CSWB, 17 June 1942. McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XIX/1a, DDA.

identified for the work were to ensure that emigrants would be able to ‘continue the religious life they have led at home’ and to ‘provide for their social welfare in their new, and often difficult surroundings’. He offered no guidance on how the CSWB should address these rather sweeping objectives beyond the general advice that ‘discretion and zeal and experience must guide [the] choice of procedure’.²⁶ McQuaid’s prioritisation of women and girls drew on the earlier concerns raised in connection with female migrants during the episcopate of his predecessor, as discussed above. That McQuaid was aware of the earlier concerns is evidenced by the presence within his papers of the earlier documents. His chosen approach, based on the establishment of a bureau in Dublin is also a clear reflection of the solution proposed by his predecessor.

The initial work of the CSWB can be tracked through the surviving meeting agendas, often annotated with hand written notes by McQuaid himself, held within the Dublin Diocesan Archives. During 1942, the focus was on activities in Ireland – identifying things that could be done to support intending emigrants before embarkation. Early plans included the compilation of a ‘register of suitable lodgings’ for emigrants requiring accommodation in Dublin and the opening of hostel accommodation for women and girls within the Baggot Street Convent, run by the Sisters of Mercy.²⁷ Securing the religious and social welfare of emigrants in Britain was attempted through the collection of information from individual emigrants on their intended destinations. The CSWB would then forward the details to the Catholic parish covering the address given. It was assumed that the British parishes would make contact with the new arrivals and draw them into the parish, thereby taking over

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Autograph note by McQuaid on CSWB Committee of Management Agenda, 20 August 1942. Legion of Mary Papers (uncatalogued at time of access, November 2008), DDA.

responsibility for their spiritual and welfare needs. The CSWB considered that the destinations of new emigrants could be obtained in a number of ways: through advertising the scheme to all parishes in Ireland so that the ‘home’ priest could provide the details himself and/or encourage the migrants themselves, or their families, to do so; through providing a ‘drop-in’ facility at the CSWB office for migrants to call in whilst in Dublin; and through the work of the Legion of Mary volunteers in meeting migrants arriving in Dublin at the railway station.

McQuaid saw the CSWB as working ‘in collaboration with the State Authority’ and he looked particularly for state action in areas where legislation or other government regulation might be required.²⁸ In the months after the establishment of the CSWB, McQuaid himself, or the committee of management met with the Taoiseach, the ministers for Justice and External Affairs and senior civil servants from both departments. McQuaid sought government regulation of employment agencies and lodging houses through a registration system and he wished to establish a system whereby the details of all persons requesting identity cards would be passed to the CSWB. He was also keen to see the age at which an individual identity card was required lowered from 16 years to 12 years. McQuaid’s concern regarding the age limit for travel permits resulted from an incident where two girls, aged 14 and 15 years, were found ‘in Westland Row, waiting for a man who did not appear until the next day.’²⁹ Ministers assured him that they would look in detail at these proposals but ultimately rejected introducing registration of employment agencies due to the

²⁸ McQuaid, autograph speech on inauguration of CSWB, 17 June 1942. McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XIX/1a, DDA.

²⁹ McQuaid, autograph notes of a meeting with Mr de Valera, Mr JP Walshe and Mr FH Boland at the Department of External Affairs, 20 July 1942. McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XIX/1a, DDA.

complexity of setting up an enforceable system and the lack of evidence that agencies were, in fact, sending ‘young people to doubtful employments’.³⁰ McQuaid’s proposals for wide ranging regulation seem to have been triggered by anecdotal reports of problems rather than by any systematic assessment of the full nature and extent of the issues. The Government response was to engage with McQuaid, hear his concerns, promise appropriate action and then assure itself that none was needed. This seems to have satisfied both parties since neither McQuaid nor the committee of management pushed their demands beyond the government response at this point, perhaps because they had no strong evidence with which to back their argument. The government received renewed calls to restrict the emigration of young women and minors during the 1950s, from moral welfare organisations in Britain. This is discussed in Chapter 4.

By the end of 1942, the CSWB had received information on 2,182 emigrants. Over half of these, 1,237, had been identified through contact with Legion of Mary volunteers across Ireland. Addresses in Britain were available for 1,657 emigrants and these had been passed to the clergy at their destination. A total of 299 emigrants were either met by Legion of Mary volunteers at Dublin railway stations or called at the CSWB office.³¹ The main work of the office was, therefore, administrative, consisting of passing contact details to British parishes. Where details were not readily available, the bureau made attempts to obtain these through further enquiries. Assurances were sought from British parish priests that the employment to which young Irish emigrants were going

³⁰ Letter from G. Boland, Department of Justice, to McQuaid, 14 August 1942. McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XIX/1a, DDA.

³¹ Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, Emigrant Section. Statistical review of the Bureau’s efforts to secure the welfare of emigrants during the period 17 June 1942 to 31 December 1942. McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XIX/1g, DDA.

would 'have facilities [for the] practice of their religious duties'. Replies from British priests do not feature in the Dublin files.³² The number of emigrants going to Britain for the first time for employment during 1942 has been estimated, from the number of new Irish identity documents issued, to be 51,711.³³ The CSWB was active for a little less than half the year, but the figures demonstrate that information was obtained by the bureau on around 10 per cent of emigrants (based on a half year number of about 25,000). The impact of the activity on the welfare of that 10 per cent, either spiritual or temporal, is hard to judge.

In its first year, the work of the CSWB was focussed on Dublin and establishing links with parish clergy around Ireland. Their function as a signpost to lodgings (including the Baggot Street Hostel for female emigrants) was a practical attempt to alleviate one of the problems experienced by emigrants passing through Dublin but it appears that the vast majority continued to make their own arrangements. Attempts to raise awareness of the CSWB with local priests across the country and encourage them to pass on details do not appear to have been effective and there is little evidence that active engagement by parish clergy was ever achieved. The CSWB's focus on making emigrants known (with or without their consent) to the Catholic parish at their destination was based on the assumption that the British priests would contact the new arrivals, support their integration into British Catholic life and in some way assume responsibility for their spiritual and welfare needs. In the response

³² See, for example, letter from Rev JW Turley, CSWB Administrator, to Parish priest of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Oldham, Lancashire enquiring whether Westhulme Hospital, Oldham (which was advertising in Ireland for probationer nurses) would provide facilities for religious practice, 15 August 1942. McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XIX/1a, DDA.

³³ Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, p.129

the CSWB made to emigrant needs, as they perceived them, the bureau and its management committee were demonstrating what is known as ‘path dependency’, that is, the tendency of institutions to be constrained by and to reproduce patterns of policy response and provision established previously.³⁴ Although technically a ‘new’ institution, the CSWB staff and management committee brought with them the established culture of Irish Catholic social and moral welfare services and applied this to their client group. The perceived needs of emigrants were not sufficiently different to other groups requiring social and moral welfare support to trigger a paradigm shift in policy thinking.³⁵ They were, of course, also constrained in what they could do due to the lack of financial resources and perhaps also by McQuaid’s injunction to them that they must progress slowly. Nonetheless, the records indicate a lack of strategic thinking about how to take the Bureau forward. The records also suggest that the management committee did not rise to the challenge set them by McQuaid and appears to have satisfied itself with discussions about operational detail (posters to be displayed in church porches and the like) rather than providing strategic leadership to the Bureau staff or the Legion volunteers. Management by committee is notorious as a means of maintaining stasis and incrementalism rather than innovation and change.³⁶ Although the management committee continued to convene, it appears to have functioned mainly to receive reports from the Director and Secretary and there is little evidence that they set the objectives or provided strategic direction to the Bureau.

³⁴ Hudson and Lowe, *Understanding the Policy Process* (Bristol, 2004), pp.151-2; Sophia Carey, *Social Security in Ireland, 1939-1952* (Dublin, 2007), pp.45-6.

³⁵ Hudson and Lowe, *Understanding the Policy Process*, p.48.

³⁶ See, for example, Ronda Muir, ‘Decision-making by committee: perceptions and misperceptions’, *FindLaw*, 2007 [consulted at: <http://articles.practice.findlaw.com/2007/Jul/30/301.html> (14 June 2011)].

In order to better understand the conditions to which Irish migrants were going, and inform the work of the CSWB, McQuaid commissioned H.J.A. Gray, the qualified social worker employed at the Bureau, to undertake a tour of England in 1943 visiting areas of Irish settlement including London, Birmingham, Manchester, Holyhead, Chester, Crewe, Rugby, Wrexham, Leeds, York, Newcastle-on-Tyne and Reading. It is the first evidence that those working with migrants were seeing a need to support them not just at embarkation but after arrival at their destination. Gray was particularly interested in the impact of the war on living and working conditions. He found a country completely focussed on the war effort, in which ‘the individual...is little more than a cog in a huge machine which provides, under constant and close control, all that may be necessary for war purposes or for human life...The war has made industrialism and mass-organisation of manpower, with its concomitant evils, more pronounced’. The contrast for Irish men and women with their ‘normal life’ would ‘sap their self-confidence and self-respect, and render them more prone to adopt the “advanced” ideas of a considerably more sophisticated world’.³⁷ Gray’s synthesis does not appear entirely objective and may reflect his own preconceptions of the evils of urban, industrial, secular societies in which alienation and depersonalisation were the order of the day.

Gray expected the Church of England to set the standards of ‘public morals and conventions’ and in this he found them sadly wanting. He noted ‘English Protestantism was pre-war tending more and more to degenerate into a simple cult of respectability. The vital force of true Christianity was lacking in the body and the outlook of its individual members.’ The war had caused further

³⁷ H.J.A. Gray, ‘Various Aspects of Conditions in Great Britain and the Progress of Work on Behalf of Irish Catholic Immigrants’, May 1943, p.4. McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XI/1a, DDA.

deterioration such that ‘the country...can only be described as pagan’. This applied particularly to ‘sex questions’, thus posing considerable risk to ‘the newcomer, - no matter how high his or her own standards of morality may be.’³⁸

Concern for women’s moral welfare is evident in Gray’s report. A particular risk for young women was ‘the wolf in sheep’s clothing’, someone who would, for example, strike up a conversation with a girl listening to a Catholic speaker in Hyde Park with the object ‘of undermining the religious or moral standards of their victims...or to commit them to the unwitting desertion of those standards’. Gray had been assured by a Westminster bishop that ‘much evil resulted from these chance acquaintanceships’.³⁹ Other dangers also presented themselves, such as ‘pseudo-Irish clubs...insidious snares to catch the unwary Irish immigrant ...[which] continue to perform their nefarious work under war-time conditions’. Irish girls were often tempted to indulge in alcohol in order to appear ‘modern’ to English friends. This could result in girls ‘rendering themselves open to grave abuse’.⁴⁰ Accommodation was often unsatisfactory and with no home environment in which to spend their leisure time there was danger that they would ‘gravitate towards undesirable centres of recreation’.⁴¹ The bad reputation attaching to Irish migrants was demoralising. There was a lack of support from English Catholics who resented the implication that ‘the “infamy” of Catholicism is revealed by the conduct of Irish people in Britain’.⁴²

These difficulties could place emigrants at risk of sexual immorality, particularly as ‘Irish boys and girls know nothing about sex...[whereas] English non-Catholic youth is saturated with unwholesome knowledge.’ The results

³⁸ Ibid., p.5.

³⁹ Ibid., p.5

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.6.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp.6-7.

⁴² Ibid., p.10.

were seen in the number of young pregnant Irish girls presenting to Catholic and local authority bodies. As noted pre-war in London, many of these pregnancies originated in Ireland, suggesting that ‘Irish boys and girls’ knew rather more about sex than Gray believed, and in these cases the local authorities in England were reluctant to take responsibility. Gray accepted the argument of these English authorities that the responsibility should lie with local agencies where ‘the trouble had originated’ and that this should include arrangements for repatriation to Ireland where appropriate. He also noted that arrangements for repatriation varied widely across England and not all English welfare organisations liaised with the Irish Catholic Protection and Rescue Society.⁴³ Gray did not elaborate on the reasons for this variation.

Gray identified the major risks for Irish emigrants in England as ‘immorality and irreligion’. However, this was based on supposition, anecdote and preconception rather than objective assessment and quantification of need. As will be seen to be the case in pretty much every report ever written on the subject during this period, the one voice absent from the discourse is that of emigrants themselves. They are present only as the subjects of the opinions of those laying claim to expert knowledge of social welfare. Based on his assessment, Gray’s proposed solution was to ensure that new emigrants were linked into the parish at their destination as soon after arrival as possible. As discussed above, the CSWB had already instituted a process of forwarding the details of individual emigrants to the receiving parish. Such a process depended on intending emigrants informing their parish priest in Ireland of their planned destination and also on the receiving parish having the resources to follow up

⁴³ Ibid., p.15.

the details provided in order to establish contact with the new arrivals. Gray recommended that 'all Catholic authorities in Ireland' should co-operate to maximise CSWB ascertainment. In England, parish clergy had established close relationships with factories in certain areas and could encourage new arrivals to make themselves known to them. Gray considered that personal contact beyond this would be essential to ensuring new migrants continued in the practice of their religion. He proposed that CSWB representatives should meet trains arriving at the major destinations for Irish migrants, including London, Birmingham and Manchester in order to provide immediate support to new arrivals. The English Legion of Mary should deploy its volunteers in an ongoing programme of visiting accommodation likely to include Irish newcomers, such as hostels, lodging houses and billets. In order to avoid the problem of unfilled leisure time acting as an opportunity for 'immorality', Catholic recreational facilities should be set up, particularly within industrial hostels. Voluntary Catholic groups should also be set up in hostels and workplaces with new migrants being encouraged to join.

Gray noted that some work with Irish emigrants was already underway, notably in Birmingham where Archbishop Williams had set up a Welfare Bureau, under a professional social worker, primarily to support Irish factory girls.⁴⁴ There was considerable interest in Irish migrant issues from both the English Catholic authorities and the Ministry of Labour; and support for the CSWB proposals. However, Gray felt that work with Irish migrants could not be left solely to English Catholic agencies due to the fact that 'Irish and English

⁴⁴ Ibid., p.19. This was probably a reference to the Selly Oak Irish Girls Club. This club was a joint venture by the Ministry of Labour, Birmingham City Council and the Archdiocese to support Irish female war workers. The driving force behind it was Helen Murtagh, a Birmingham City Councillor and voluntary advisor to the Archbishop on social welfare, not the Archbishop himself. The Selly Oak Club will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

mentalities and outlook are in many ways completely dissimilar'. The relationship between the Irish and their priests was particularly important in this respect: 'an English priest, though genuinely solicitous...cannot fathom their ideals and view points...[Irish girls may have] an ingrained impression that a priest with an English accent is no priest at all'. The solution would be to nominate an Irish priest to work with the Irish in every diocese in which there were large numbers of migrants.⁴⁵ For all that it was based on anecdote, Gray's report did identify some specific social welfare problems around illegitimate pregnancy, alcohol use and inadequate accommodation. His solution to these however was based on the belief that integration into a Catholic parish would prevent moral or social welfare problems. The rationale for this belief was not stated. As noted before, there seems to have been an implicit assumption that if people were thinking and behaving as Catholics, they would somehow self-regulate and not get into social difficulties; or if they did, surveillance by the priest would ensure that they were dealt with promptly. Gray's report did not lead to any immediate changes in approach to services for migrants. However, the influence of his argument that safeguarding religious belief and practice was the best preventative for social and moral welfare problems and that this would require action by the Irish hierarchy in England as well as Ireland can be seen in subsequent policy developments as will be shown later in this chapter.

McQuaid also sought advice from correspondents in England. It is not clear from the records who these people were or why they were approached for advice. One assessment of the issues faced by Irish factory workers, particularly those housed in camps and hostels, came from P. van der Heijden, a

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.20.

correspondent based in Ipswich. The records are silent on who van der Heijden was or why he was considered an expert on this issue.⁴⁶ Van der Heijden visited all the factories in England where there were known to be Irish workers and the camps and hostels attached to them. He also liaised with ‘Government Directors’ and factory managers. Reports were positive: the Irish were regarded as good workers whom the managers could treat ‘exactly as the British Labourers’. In addition, ‘all the Managers agree[d] that the Southern Irish are much better than the Northern.’ Accommodation was also felt to be satisfactory, as was religious observance, particularly where there was ‘an Irish Priest in charge’ and regular Mass attendance could be encouraged. Van der Heijden also met with the parish priests in all areas where the factories were situated. Whilst many were ‘doing their utmost to help in the spiritual welfare of our Labourers...in some cases it was necessary to press the matter very much’. As a result, Sunday Mass was now being said in all camps and a parish priest was visiting at least once a week ‘to talk to the men’.

Like Gray, van der Heijden argued that Irish priests should be responsible for the spiritual welfare of migrants and he considered that they should be officially recognised as ‘Labour Chaplains’ by the Ministry of Labour. The costs of this scheme should be shared by the British and Irish governments and ‘an older Priest’ should be appointed to act as Liaison Officer between the Irish and English Bishops. However, whereas Gray believed Irish priests to be necessary to establish relations with new migrants, van der Heijden considered the role of Labour Chaplains would go further than this and deliver wider ranging outcomes. The chaplains could bring Irish labourers together as a group who

⁴⁶ Letter from P. van der Heijden to Archbishop McQuaid, 20 December 1943. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants Welfare 1, General Correspondence 1939/1961, AB8/B/XXIX/a/1, DDA.

could support each other through the maintenance of a shared Catholic and Irish identity. This would lead to ‘higher moral standard[s]’ and increase the respect of the British for the Irish workers. Furthermore, by being developed into ‘better workers’ they would be far more use in Ireland when they eventually returned home.⁴⁷

Both Gray’s and van der Heijden’s analyses of migrant needs were based on a broader preventive approach to spiritual, moral and social welfare than earlier discussions, focused on the moral, practical, and resource implications of illegitimate pregnancy, had been. Gray included a reiteration of the need for repatriation schemes for single mothers, which was in line with earlier debate, but looked beyond this to the wider needs of both male and female migrants, as he saw them. Van der Heijden had nothing to contribute to debate about the welfare of female migrants, mainly because the group of which he had first hand knowledge were all male. Both implied a need to socialise new arrivals, of both sexes, into their new environment through maintenance of their Catholicism and the social and cultural practices associated with it. Both considered that real or perceived differences between English and Irish Catholics created a barrier between Irish migrants and English Catholic parishes and agencies. Van der Heijden’s model saw the Irish remaining as discrete, cohesive groups under the guidance of Irish priests, with the maintenance of a sense of Irish national identity being as important as the maintenance of their Catholicism. He saw migration as temporary, with one of the aims being to ensure emigrants would be able to re-integrate into Irish society on their eventual return.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

The formulation of migrant need by both Gray and van der Heijden was one based on the belief that ensuring continued practice of the Catholic religion and assimilation within a Catholic parish (preferably under the guidance of an Irish priest) would solve temporal welfare problems as well as spiritual ones. This seems to have been based on an implicit argument that the outward practice of religion would be associated with an internalisation of Catholic moral and behavioural standards and individuals would, therefore, self-regulate their behaviour accordingly. Furthermore, being embedded within a Catholic parish, particularly under the eye of an Irish priest, would mean that they could be kept under observation and any emerging aberrant behaviour could be challenged and checked, thus dealing with the problems of both ‘immorality and irreligion’ with one stroke. This construction ignores the possibility that some individuals might be actively rejecting religion or the church and assumes that their drift from religious practice resulted from youth, moving to a non-Catholic environment with different moral standards, lack of awareness of religious facilities at their destination and/or individual character weakness.

Although both Gray and van der Heijden stressed the need for initiatives in Britain, no change was made to the basic operating model of the CSWB, which continued to focus on contact with emigrants before departure with the aim of passing their care over to the local parish at their destination. In the annual report for 1946, the CSWB reported that it had ‘interested itself in the welfare of 37,000 emigrants’ between its inception in June 1942 and the end of 1945.⁴⁸ Given that around 111,000 individuals may have emigrated over that period, this suggests that around one third either identified themselves to the CSWB or had

⁴⁸ CSWB, Emigrant Section, Annual Report 1946. McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XIX/11g, DDA.

their details forwarded to it by their home priest, family or some other agency.⁴⁹

This indicates that the CSWB was reasonably successful in establishing at least some form of contact with its client group. The impact of this contact on individual migrants or the extent to which it altered their experience of migration compared with those migrants whose details were not passed to the CSWB, is not known.

The end of the war brought neither an end to migration nor a return of those who had left to work in the war industries. Instead, annual net migration increased and continued to do so, reaching a peak between 1955 and 1957 and continuing at high levels well into the 1960s.⁵⁰ In 1946, the bureau passed details on 3,000 new emigrants to parishes in Britain, 1,000 girls used the overnight hostel accommodation at Baggot Street, Dublin. These figures, together totalling 4,000 contacts, represented the core business of the CWSB but were exceeded by a factor of almost three by the 11,000 Irish holidaymakers who requested advice about accommodation from the bureau.⁵¹ This latter group suggest an element of ‘mission creep’ since they do not appear to be a group with any welfare need but rather one seeking to use the bureau as some form of travel advisory service – not a purpose for which it was intended.

In July 1946, the British government withdrew the requirement for all those travelling from Ireland to Britain to be in possession of a travel permit issued through the British government office in Dublin.⁵² This meant that Dublin was no longer the sole port of embarkation for migrants and removed the main argument for the CSWB to co-ordinate the collection and transmission of

⁴⁹ Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, p. 164.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 164; Daly, *The Slow Failure*, pp. 185, 188, 330.

⁵¹ CSWB, Emigrant Section, Annual Report, 1946. McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XIX/11g, DDA.

⁵² Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, p.163.

emigrant details on a national basis. The CSWB annual reports from 1947 through to the early 1950s record with regret the small number of emigrants either identifying themselves or being identified to the CSWB.⁵³ In 1949, the bureau received details of thirty-eight Irish people abroad about whom relatives at home had concerns regarding spiritual welfare. The bureau reported being able to ‘remove the grounds for anxiety’ in eleven cases; in one case by achieving ‘the validation of a marriage which had taken place outside the church’. Three hundred and thirty nine young emigrants were brought ‘in contact’ with clergy or Catholic societies abroad. Given that net migration was estimated at around 37,000 in 1949, the impact of the CSWB was clearly small.⁵⁴ Activity levels remained similar into the early 1950s. In response, the bureau stressed the need for families and clergy in Ireland to ‘furnish particulars’ of emigrants to the CSWB. In 1951, a campaign was run to stress the importance of ensuring that appropriate religious facilities would be available before accepting any offer of employment abroad. This was supported by publicising, in the ‘daily, provincial and Catholic press...one particular distressing report as to the difficulty of practice of religion in Gt. Britain.’⁵⁵ Given the low levels of activity resulting from Irish emigration, the CSWB diverged to providing support for young German girls arriving in Dublin to work as au-pairs. Provision for them included a social club, musical evenings, dances, spiritual retreats and tea parties. By 1953, the need for this provision had ceased since the existing group of girls had either returned to Germany or ‘become absorbed, in the ordinary way, in the life of Dublin people’. Since no new

⁵³ CSWB, Emigrant Section, Annual Reports, 1946-1952. McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XIX/11g, DDA.

⁵⁴ Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, p.164.

⁵⁵ CSWB, Emigrant Section, Annual Report 1951. McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XIX/11g, DDA.

migrants from Germany were arriving, the club was disbanded.⁵⁶ At this point, the CSWB had become near moribund whilst at the same time, continuing high emigration suggested that there were needs to be met even if the CSWB were not currently the appropriate vehicle for doing so. The annual reports of this time include the opening addresses given by McQuaid which indicate his concerns at the apparent inability of the Bureau to identify and address emigrant needs.⁵⁷

Reviewing policy for Irish migrants to meet post-War needs

By 1953, McQuaid was aware that the CSWB was not achieving its aims and that, with the cessation of travel restrictions, it could not claim a national co-ordinating role. A further issue was that the present administrative arrangements did not allow the Irish hierarchy to give a good account of its activities on behalf of Irish migrants to Rome. There was rising concern that British parishes lacked the resources or motivation to make active contact with new Irish arrivals and there were increasing reports of 'leakage' from the church of the Irish in Britain on a large scale. Clearly, more activity in Britain was required to address these problems. McQuaid raised the issues at the General Meeting of the Irish Bishops in June 1953. The bishops agreed the need for bishops in the dioceses of origin to liaise formally with their counterparts in dioceses of destination concerning the spiritual and temporal welfare of migrants and for this diocesan-based activity to be formally co-ordinated at national level in both countries. The result was the establishment in Ireland of an Episcopal Committee for the Care of Emigrants to act as a liaison committee with the hierarchy of England

⁵⁶ CSWB, Emigrant Section, Annual Reports, 1951-53. McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XIX/11g, DDA.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

and Wales. The committee consisted of the Archbishops of Tuam, Raphoe, Ferns and Kerry but the important contribution of the Archbishop of Dublin, who was not a member, was recognised and acknowledged. McQuaid's degree of influence on the committee and its work is reflected by the statement that he was 'associated with all [the committee's] activities, attending its meetings and not only giving advice and help but taking the initiative in the organisation of schemes for our emigrants' spiritual and temporal welfare.'⁵⁸ The degree to which McQuaid was identified with this work is reflected by the fact that the archives contain correspondence addressed to McQuaid, commenting or making suggestions on emigrant work, which should have been addressed to Tuam as chairman – as McQuaid pointed out in his replies.⁵⁹

The setting up of the Episcopal Committee for the Care of Emigrants provided a means for McQuaid to lead work for emigrants on a national basis rather than being limited to Dublin alone. This enabled him to have oversight of interventions for migrants across Ireland and to propose co-ordination of these where he felt it appropriate. This, in effect, created a reporting and governance structure for work with migrants that gave responsibility for this work to the Episcopal Committee. This then, in turn, became the body responsible for giving an account of migrant work to the Holy See in Rome. Although technically the responsibility for setting strategic direction and overseeing the work sat with the Episcopal Committee, in reality it was McQuaid who provided the strategic leadership and operational management.

⁵⁸ Memorandum on Irish Emigrants in England and Wales (undated), p.17. McQuaid Papers, AB8/B/XXIX/d/34, Emigrants' Welfare 3, Irish Episcopal Commission, DDA.

⁵⁹ See, for example, letter from the Christus Rex Society regarding the scheme for Irish secular clergy to be seconded to parishes in England during their annual leave. Letter from Secretary to the Christus Rex Society to McQuaid, 12 June 1958. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare, AB8/B/XXIX/j/57, DDA)

This appears to have been welcomed, rather than challenged, by the committee members.

Another important change made by McQuaid in the early 1950s was the replacement of the Very Reverend J.W. Turley as Director of the CSWB with Monsignor Cecil Barrett.⁶⁰ Barrett was already the director of the CPRSI and an acknowledged expert on the Irish adoption process (at that time an informal, extra-legal procedure).⁶¹ He does not appear to have had any prior experience of general social welfare work with emigrants or other groups but his moral protection work experience was relevant to the concerns regarding pregnant single Irish women seeking care in Britain. From his appointment, the CSWB appears to have become more focussed on its primary role of providing aid to Irish emigrants and a clearer link with the CPRSI repatriation scheme is evident from the annual reports.⁶²

With the CSWB now managed on a firmer footing, McQuaid turned to developing initiatives under the auspices of the Episcopal Committee. These included the production of a handbook for intending migrants, the consolidation of existing activities such as annual missions to British parishes, which McQuaid considered required better organisation and co-ordination; and the assessment of Irish migrant needs in Britain and implementation of new services to support them.

The *Catholic Handbook for Irish Men and Women Going to England* formed a core element of the Episcopal Committee's provision for migrants. First

⁶⁰ Documentation recording the personnel changes at the CSWB was not found in the DDA papers. However, Barrett's name replaces that of Turley on the CSWB letterhead from 1954 onwards and on CSWB annual reports from 1955.

⁶¹ Cecil J Barrett, *Adoption: the Parent, the Child, the Home* (Dublin, 1952).

⁶² The full typescript versions of CSWB annual reports from 1955 on contain details of repatriations as an appendix. McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, Emigrant section, Annual reports, AB8/B/XIX/5ac, DDA.

published in 1953, it was re-issued in a second edition in 1968.⁶³ It was published by the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland, and was intended to be displayed prominently for sale in parish churches across Ireland. It was also made available to parishes in England.⁶⁴ The stated aim of the *Handbook* was ‘to encourage emigrants to keep the faith themselves [and be] apostles to others’. Although addressed to migrants themselves, it also advised parents to discourage their children from migrating. Those who migrated nevertheless were advised to make themselves known to the parish priest at their destination and attend confession and communion as soon as possible. Migrants were warned of the dangers of mistaking a ‘high church Anglo-Catholic church’ for a true Catholic church. Joining a local confraternity was recommended as a good way to get involved in the social life of their new parish.⁶⁵ Moral behaviour was stressed, with warnings to avoid drinking to excess and the frequenting of dancehalls which ‘permit or encourage sin’. The responsibility for moral behaviour was placed with ‘Irish girl[s]’ as their actions would ‘dictate whether sin’ was committed or not. Emigrants were advised to become familiar with Catholic teaching so that they could defend their faith against challenges from Englishmen (whose knowledge of God was believed to be ‘very sketchy’) and also help to shape the policies of trades unions and political groups to which they might belong along Catholic lines. Marriage partners should be ‘not only

⁶³ *A Catholic Handbook for Men and Women Going To England* (Dublin, 1953, 2nd edition 1968). Copies in McQuaid Papers, Emigrants’ Welfare 1, AB8/B/XXIX/a, DDA.

⁶⁴ For background on the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland, see: <http://www.catholicbishops.ie/veritas/> (accessed 19 August 2012); for distribution of the *Handbook* in particular, see *Handbook*, cover.

⁶⁵ *A Handbook*, pp.1-2.

Catholic but a good Catholic' and communism, Protestantism and freemasonry should be avoided.⁶⁶

Three strands can be discerned in the advice contained in the *Handbook*. The focus on drink and dancehalls as potential sources of sin was similar to the advice on these matters given from the pulpit and in pastorals on a regular basis in Ireland.⁶⁷ Louise Fuller discusses the rise of the commercial dancehall in Ireland from the 1920s to its heyday in the 1940s and 1950s. The risks of 'company keeping' and the opportunity for sin on the way home from such dancehalls were regarded as a challenge to the ideals of Catholic life. In Ireland, the remedy was seen in the provision of dances through parish halls where young people could be properly supervised in a 'good Catholic atmosphere'.⁶⁸ In England, the lack of supervised alternatives to commercial halls meant that migrants needed to be self-regulating rather than dependent on surveillance to avoid falling in to sin. The burden of self-regulation was seen as lying with young women rather than with young men.⁶⁹ Moral behaviour seems to have been regarded by the church at this time as entirely synonymous with avoidance of drunkenness and extra-marital sexual activity, a view corroborated by external observers. The English sociologists John Rex and Robert Moore in their study of immigrant communities in Sparkbrook, Birmingham noted that the Catholic priest serving a largely Irish community in the area, whilst 'intellectually able', had a 'simple vision of the evils of drink and sexuality as the main evils he had to fight.'⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp.3-5.

⁶⁷ Louise Fuller, *Irish Catholicism since 1950: The Undoing of a Culture* (Dublin, 2002), pp.53-54.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p.53.

⁶⁹ *A Handbook*, p.3.

⁷⁰ Rex and Moore, *Race, Community and Conflict*, p.151.

The second strand emerging from the *Handbook*, was the need for migrants to safeguard themselves against challenges that would be new to them in England. These resulted particularly from the fact that England was industrialised and had only a Catholic minority.⁷¹ Migrants needed to be able to protect their faith in response to their Protestant surroundings and the appeal of communism. Again, the individual's internalisation of Catholic teaching on faith and morals, rather than surveillance by clergy, would be key to this. The third strand reflected the opportunities for evangelisation that could grow from committed Catholics with a deep understanding of the basis of their faith. With such knowledge they could defend not only their own faith, but begin the conversion of others. Providing intending migrants with advice on maintaining religious belief and practice through the *Handbook* was not seen, by itself, to be sufficient. Action by Irish priests on behalf of the Irish hierarchy was also required and it is to this that this study will now turn.

Building an administrative framework for work with Irish migrants in England, 1953-1957

McQuaid believed that continuing high levels of emigration were an inevitable consequence of the global shift of population from rural to industrial areas and he sought to establish a network of services that would provide spiritual and temporal support for migrants starting in their home community and reaching to their destination of settlement. Since McQuaid expected most migrants to

⁷¹ In 1949, 6 per cent of the population of England and Wales was Catholic, based on the Registrar General's estimate that there were 2,649,000 Catholics out of a total population of 43,595,000 as at 30 June 1949. See George Andrew Beck, 'Today and Tomorrow' in George Andrew Beck (ed.), *The English Catholics, 1850-1950* (London, 1950), p.587.

remain permanently in Britain, maintenance of religious belief and practice was not only important for them but also to ensure that their children would be brought up as Catholics. McQuaid's views were possibly influenced by, and were certainly in line with, those of International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), a body established in Geneva in 1951 and formally endorsed by Pope Pius XII in 1952.⁷² McQuaid affiliated the CSWB with the ICMC, claiming it to be the 'Irish National Agency for Migration'. By doing so he established the CSWB as the body responsible for reporting to and co-ordinating with the ICMC.⁷³ This enabled the Irish hierarchy to give an account of its work for migrants to the international Catholic community and ensured that oversight and management of this function remained under McQuaid's control. The Holy See further endorsed the priority it accorded to the care of migrants through the establishment of the Superior Council for Emigrants within the Sacred Consistorial Congregation in 1952. The Irish hierarchy appointed a representative to the Superior Council from the staff of the Irish College in Rome.⁷⁴

McQuaid gave his personal secretary, Father Christopher Mangan, the task of producing proposals for action to support the Irish in England to be presented to Bishop James Staunton of Ferns, Secretary to the Standing Committee of Irish Bishops, on behalf of the Episcopal Committee for the Care of Emigrants. Mangan based his assessment and recommendations on information from correspondents in England. Notable amongst these was a lengthy submission from the historian, F.X. Martin, an Augustinian friar who at that time was

⁷² International Catholic Migration Commission, *History in Brief*, <www.icmc.net/e/about_us/index.htm> (accessed 9 August 2008).

⁷³ Memorandum on Irish Emigrants in England and Wales (undated), p.6. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 3, Irish Episcopal Commission, AB8/B/XXIX/d/34, DDA.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

studying at Cambridge.⁷⁵ Martin based his report on his own observations of the Irish in England (including those studying at Cambridge University) and the advice of fellow Augustinians working in Nottingham and London. Martin considered that the needs of Irish migrants were not homogenous but varied by social class and educational attainment. He noted the successful transition to active participation in Catholic life in England of ‘the educated Irish, doctors, teachers, nurses, social workers, dentists, etc’ and the marked contrast between these and the ‘half-educated, with only a primary school course completed’. Similarly, there had been a long line of Irish students at Cambridge University who had enjoyed a ‘skillfully organized student Catholic life’ through the university Catholic Chaplaincy. For the poorly educated, working class ‘Irishman’, drifting away from faith, ‘leakage’ as it was usually described, was the major risk. Leakage could both result from and lead to social problems in England but it had its roots in Ireland. The underlying cause was that the ‘semi-educated Irishman had little real understanding of his faith’. Poor education also underlay many of the behaviours associated with young Irishmen in England: they lacked prudence and spent their money on ‘drink, dogs [and] horses’. Martin saw the attitude of English Catholics towards the Irish as compounding the problem – they ‘looked askance’ at the Irish for their ‘lack of social graces’. Although the ‘great bulk’ of English clergy were of Irish origin ‘they would rather forget the fact ... and become more English than the English

⁷⁵ F.X. Martin’s report appears to have formed part of a lengthy letter. At the time of access (November 2008), the front page of Martin’s report was missing and neither the date, nor the addressee was recorded. The section in the McQuaid papers begins ‘In response to the questions of Irish emigration you raised...’ but what these questions were is not recorded. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants’ Welfare, AB8/B/XXIX/a/1, DDA.

themselves'.⁷⁶ This assessment suggested that integrating Irish migrants into English parishes might not be an easy matter.

Martin seems to have been ignorant of the efforts already made by the CSWB, because his suggestion for addressing the problem was that Irish parish priests should write to 'their opposite numbers in England-Scotland to notify them of the incoming Irish...It [would be] up to the English clergy to keep tabs on the immigrants, to get them to join RC clubs, societies, etc.' In making this suggestion, Martin appears to have ignored the concerns he himself had raised that the attitude of English Catholics and clergy was one of the barriers to continued practice of faith. He suggested that Legion of Mary volunteers could work to bring Irish migrants into English parishes. Getting the Irish into 'suitable RC surroundings' soon after arrival was essential to avoid leakage. Martin noted the success of the Augustinian social halls in Hoxton and Hammersmith in attracting large numbers of young Irish people from all over London. They could then be 'hooked into religious duties' and encouraged to join their local parishes. Martin noted the value of having Irish priests available, since Irish migrants felt 'that the Irish priests understand them and give them a fair hearing'. Finally, Martin set the problem of Irish leakage in the context of similar leakage in young English Catholics – he had been informed by 'reliable sources' that '50 per cent of the youth leaving English RC schools lose the practice of their religion'.⁷⁷ However, his recommendations were for interventions focused on the Irish rather than on Catholic youth in England in general.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

It is not clear why Martin should have been considered an appropriate source of advice on the needs of the Irish in Britain. The Catholic church at the time was known for its distrust of social sciences and sociological methodology for the assessment of needs, preferring to rely instead on perceptions obtained through pastoral work.⁷⁸ However, Martin, a historian, was not notable for the breadth of his pastoral experience.

Mangan attempted to draw some concrete proposals for action out of these ideas about migrant needs. In his briefing paper for McQuaid to take to the Bishop of Ferns, Secretary to the Standing Committee of Irish Bishops, Mangan identified three core elements for future policy. These were: preparation of ‘our boys and girls by instruction and advice before they leave for England...looking after them when they arrive in England [and] co-ordination of efforts’ between the Irish and English hierarchies. Mangan proposed the employment of paid workers at the main points of destination in England who would help with immediate needs such as ‘suitable lodgings’. To ensure that new Irish arrivals would have ready access to an Irish priest, he proposed the establishment of a ‘special Society of Secular Priests’ who would work with English clergy to ‘draw in the Irish arrivals [to parish life]’. The Society would be based in England and Irish priests would be seconded to it for a fixed term, without losing seniority at home. These priests would work only with the Irish ‘by giving retreats and missions, visiting the Irish in their lodgings, organizing

⁷⁸ Michael P Hornsby-Smith, *Catholics in England, 1950-2000* (London, 1999), p.7; Conor K. Ward, ‘Socio-religious research in Ireland’, *Social Compass*, 11 (1964), pp.25 – 30; and A.E.C.W. Spencer, ‘The Newman Demographic Survey, 1953-1964, reflections on birth, life and death of a Catholic institute for socio-religious research’, *Social Compass*, 11 (1964), pp.31-42.

sodalities...and societies of a recreational and cultural nature for them.’⁷⁹

Mangan considered that the main reason Irish people did not join parish organisations was because ‘they have an inferiority complex *vis a vis* the English and feel embarrassed working in ... parochial organisations with English Catholics’. Starting them off in Irish-run organisations would enable them to ‘improve themselves intellectually and overcome their inferiority complex and eventually take their place in parochial organisations’. The overall aim would be to integrate the Irish into English parishes not ‘to keep [them] as an indigestible group distinct from the normal Catholic life of England’.⁸⁰

However, it is not clear from Mangan’s proposals how the transition from Irish-run organisations to mainstream parish ones would be accomplished.

Mangan’s proposals, although somewhat more concrete than Martin’s, were still light on detail and the use of paid welfare workers would have required funding which had not been identified either in Ireland or England. It is not clear whether McQuaid raised these ideas with Ferns at this point. What he did do was to explore with Frank Duff whether Legion volunteers could work with Irish migrants in England. The Legion was already providing volunteers to support the work of the CSWB, as described earlier. There were branches already established in England with a history of delivering social welfare work. The Legion had been established in Liverpool in 1930 and by 1955 was providing support to parishes through visiting the sick; sacristy and altar work; charity collections and so on. Beyond the parishes, the Legion ran a evangelization project through house-to-house visitation of non-Catholics, a

⁷⁹ Reverend Christopher Mangan, ‘Some suggestions on Spiritual Health for Emigrants given to the Bishop of Ferns, January 1954’. Legion of Mary Papers (uncatalogued at time of access, November 2008), DDA.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

‘coloured mission’ to ‘coloured’ people both Catholic and non-Catholic, a ‘lodging house mission’ and an ‘apostleship of the sea’ offering an outreach service to Catholic seamen to strengthen them in the practice of faith.⁸¹ In London, where Legion branches had been established in 1929, the Legion ran a girls’ probation hostel with funding from the Home Office.⁸² McQuaid had selected the Legion of Mary to provide volunteer support to the CSWB because of his confidence in their ability not only to provide volunteers but to deploy these within the context of sustainable, complex projects. However, the approach that McQuaid now discussed with Duff was a departure from the established pattern of Legion work. Duff was formulating a new approach that would expand from the current model of small branches of highly committed volunteers, to create a new movement with the aim of encouraging faith and the ‘apostolic spirit’ in a wider group of people than those to whom the traditional Legion model would appeal. Duff advocated bringing Irish migrants in England together in groups organized by Legion members with the aim of strengthening their faith and helping them spread the faith to non-Catholics. By acting as a social group which would bring ‘boys and girls together’ it would encourage Catholic marriages and be ‘a breeding ground for Legionaries’. Giving young Irish people the knowledge and skills to discuss their faith publicly would help them overcome their ‘sense of inferiority’ and encourage them to take part in the wider activities of their new parishes in England. Duff argued that this new group, to be called ‘the Patricians’ would not compete with any of the other initiatives that were either already established or being considered. He stressed

⁸¹ Legion of Mary, Liverpool Archdiocese, *Commemorative Booklet for the Silver Jubilee, 1930-1955*. McQuaid Papers, Legion of Mary, 1950-1971, AB8/B/XXI, DDA.

⁸² ‘Legion of Mary Solve a London Problem’, *Catholic Herald*, 16 October 1942 [consulted at: <http://archive.catholicherald.co.uk/article/16th-october-1942/6/legion-of-mary-solve-a-london-problem> (19 August 2012)].

that whilst activities such as annual missions and facilities such as hostels or advice bureaux were expensive in terms of both capital and revenue, the Patrician scheme would be entirely voluntary with no start up or ongoing cost. Furthermore, it would equip people with a moral and religious framework within which to determine their own behavior and would give them the social skills necessary for navigating the complex environment of modern industrial society. Having become self-regulating, they would have less need for institutional support in the future.⁸³

In April 1954, Mangan met with Duff to discuss these ideas and a proposal was developed to send two experienced Legionaries to England to assess the situation of Irish migrants there and explore support for the Patrician idea. The assessment of need was not intended to identify ways of responding – the decision to implement the Patrician model had already been taken and the survey visit was intended to indicate how it should be introduced rather than to generate alternative options. The two Legionaries selected for the study trip were Hubert (Hubey) Daly, a farmer from Kilbeggan who had been selected as Legion envoy to the Gold Coast but had been unable to go due to ill health. The second representative was Phyllis Dowdall, a supervisor at ‘Messrs Arnott’s factory’ who would have been sent to Indo-China to work for the Legion had not the war situation there precluded this.⁸⁴ The two were to be sent as CSWB,

⁸³ ‘The Patrician Society’, undated, unsigned paper recording the views of Frank Duff. The style and context suggests probable authorship by Reverend Christopher Mangan after discussion with Duff. The date, based on position in file and context is probably April 1954. Legion of Mary Papers (uncatalogued at time of access November 2008), DDA.

⁸⁴ Hubey Daley returned to his farm in Kilbeggan and remained there until his death in 2007 (see: http://www.rip.ie/death_notices_detail.asp?NoticeID=23107, accessed 19 August 2012); Phyllis Dowdall subsequently married Dr Michael McGuinness, also a committed Legionary, and worked with the Columban Fathers in London to implement the Patrician scheme. She died in 2010 (Legion of Mary, Concilium Bulletin, January 2011 [consulted at: <http://www.legionofmary.ie/news/article/Concilium-Bulletin-January-2011/> (19 August 2012)]).

rather than Legion of Mary, representatives to avoid antagonizing the English Senatus (governing body of the Legion in England). McQuaid supported the proposal and personally provided £500 to cover a six-month trip. He also provided letters of introduction to English bishops. To ensure due administrative process had been followed, McQuaid obtained the support of the Bishop of Ferns on behalf of the Irish Bishops' Conference. McQuaid himself was persuaded that 'only the establishment of the Legion among emigrants can help permanently' (the emphasis is McQuaid's).⁸⁵ The solution therefore lay in ensuring migrants internalized their faith and regulated their behaviour accordingly, rather than attempting to provide external support through institutions such as hostels and bureaux.

In the event, Phyllis Dowdall was unable to make the trip due to illness and Hubey Daly set off alone.⁸⁶ His trip lasted from April to November 1954. Throughout this time he regularly reported via long, weekly letters to Frank Duff. On his return, a report of his findings was written and submitted, by Mangan, to the Bishop of Ferns. Ferns acknowledged that he received this but appears to have mislaid it, as attempts by Mangan to have it returned were unsuccessful.⁸⁷ Daly's letters to Duff are, therefore, the only remaining record of the trip. Daly spent the first four months in London and then moved on to Birmingham and other areas of significant Irish settlement. His approach was to discuss the problems of the Irish with people working with them. His

It is not known how old they were at the time of their deaths but, if they both lived to 80, they would have been in their mid-twenties in 1954.

⁸⁵ Rev C Mangan, typescript report of discussions with Frank Duff with autograph notes by McQuaid, dated 26 April 1954. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, AB8/B/XIX/20g, DDA.

⁸⁶ Letter from Hubey Daly to Frank Duff, 21 July 1954. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, AB8/B/XIX/20g, DDA.

⁸⁷ Letter from James Staunton of Ferns to Mangan, 19 February 1955. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, AB8/B/XIX/20g, DDA.

informants were generally Catholic and included members of the Legion of Mary in England; priests, both Irish and English; probation officers; magistrates; hospital almoners and those working with specific groups such as single mothers. On occasion, Daly went to dancehalls frequented by young Irish people in order to observe their behaviour but he does not appear to have tried to find out from them what problems they faced or what support they might value.

Daly had no difficulty getting people to talk to him, although several complained that they were 'a bit tired of investigations'.⁸⁸ A view he heard repeatedly from Legion of Mary representatives and from priests working with the Irish was that the main problems related to religious adherence and standards of behaviour. The problems arose in Ireland as a result of inadequate religious formation and the indifference of parents to 'the fate of their children in England'. Irish parents made little effort to check what conditions their children would be coming to in England and this was felt to be in marked contrast to the greater diligence shown by parents in other countries.⁸⁹

In London, Daly met Father Tom McNamara, an Irish priest who was a member of the Westminster diocesan clergy. He was the driving force behind the 'Irish priests committee', a group of Irish clergy working in London who had 'stud[ied] the problem' of Irish migrants in the city. Their view was that 'looking after' and 'protecting' the new arrivals, in a Catholic environment, during their first year in London was crucial to maintaining their Catholic faith and practice. Their proposed solution was to establish an Irish Centre that could

⁸⁸ Letter from Hubey Daly to Frank Duff, 21 July 1954. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, AB8/B/XIX/20g, DDA.

⁸⁹ Letter from Daly to Duff, 17 July 1954. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, AB8/B/XIX/20g, DDA.

direct people into suitable lodgings and employment. Temporary hostel accommodation would be available for those without lodgings and recreational facilities would be offered in the evenings. Daly noted that the committee had existed for 'a long while' but appeared to have made little progress 'as a result of disagreement among the members'. He was not convinced by McNamara's arguments and did not consider the plans to be realistic. He reported to Duff that, since there was such a shortage of suitable 'digs' in London, the idea of finding enough for the 'thousands of Irish coming over' was impracticable. McNamara had already set up a hostel for Irish men in Tollington Park and it had proved impossible to find permanent lodgings for the thirty men there. Nevertheless, McNamara still saw expansion of temporary hostel provision as the way forward – to the extent that Daly (perhaps with some exaggeration) told Duff that McNamara's 'ideal is a hostel in almost every street in London'. Whilst Daly was unconvinced by McNamara's plans, the latter was not convinced by the 'Patrician' proposal and discussions between the two seem to have reached an impasse.⁹⁰

Complaints about Irish migrants of both sexes were based on their drift away from religious practice. Problem behaviour associated with men included 'working on Sundays', 'drinking to excess' and petty criminality. Daly noted the number of Irish names appearing on court lists but pointed out that some of these belonged 'to people who [were] not born in Ireland and [were] not even Catholic'. Routine statistics on criminal convictions by nationality were not available. Adverse assessments of Irish women focused on sexual behaviour

⁹⁰ Letter from Daly to Duff, 17 July 1954. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, AB8/B/XIX/20g, DDA.

such as prostitution, 'living with coloured men' and illegitimate pregnancy.⁹¹ The Irish 'inferiority complex', coupled with inadequate religious education and being in an environment where 'religion is not practiced in a routine way' was identified as the cause of drift from religion and falling standards of behaviour.⁹² One of Daly's informants, Father Stibbs, parish priest at Feltham, Middlesex and leader of the Legion's London Street Girl Praesidium, told him that a large number of Irish girls were known to be working as prostitutes.⁹³ On receiving this news, Cecil Barrett, Director of the CSWB, himself wrote to Stibbs to verify the position. Stibbs informed him that based on women known to 'his legionaries', 9 per cent of Soho and Mayfair prostitutes, 17 per cent of Hyde Park and 8 per cent of East End prostitutes were Irish. The greater proportion of Irish girls amongst the Hyde Park prostitutes was thought to reflect the fact that women working there tended to have drifted into prostitution. Stibbs also noted that there were an appreciable number of Irish women living in 'irregular unions' in the East End, particularly 'with coloured men'. Whether women cohabiting with men would themselves have seen this as a problem or welcomed help from the church, whatever form that might have taken, is unclear.⁹⁴

Daly met with Miss Byrne (daughter of Alfie Byrne, Lord Mayor of Dublin) who wanted to establish a home for 'the better type' of Irish 'unmarried mother' to avoid the necessity of their going into the 'usual type of homes' where they could come under 'evil influence' from other residents. He also met her

⁹¹ Ibid., and letter from Daly to Duff, 24 July 1954. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, AB8/B/XIX/20g, DDA.

⁹² Letter from Daly to Duff, 21 July 1954. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, AB8/B/XIX/20g, DDA.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Letter from WJ Stibbs, Parish Priest at St Vincent's, Feltham, Middlesex to Cecil Barrett, 4 November 1954. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, AB8/B/XIX/20g, DDA.

colleague, Miss Donaghue, a prison visitor, who asserted that ‘50 per cent of Holloway inmates are Catholic, and most of them Irish’. Both women wanted the Irish Embassy to appoint a ‘welfare officer’ and had been attempting to raise funds ‘to help people who have got into trouble’.⁹⁵ Another informant, Maurice Foley from the Young Christian Workers (YCW) did not support the establishment of homes, hostels or advice bureaux to address the problems associated with the Irish. He had previously spent a year living and working with young Irish migrants in Birmingham in order to investigate why they drifted from religious faith and practice. Like the Legion of Mary, he believed their lack of internalized ‘living Christianity’ left them unable to ‘rise superior to their surroundings and eventually overcome obstacles’. The YCW did not support the Patrician approach on the basis that ‘you cannot mass-produce apostles’. However, Foley did not have any alternative solutions to offer.⁹⁶

A recurring theme was that the Irish could be separated into two groups – the ‘good Irish’ who adhered to religious practice and were ‘an example to others’ and the ‘bad Irish’ who ‘[left] the church, contract[ed] mixed marriages and show...complete disregard for religion’. Loss of religion led to bad behaviour, often described in lurid terms, so that ‘there [were] no depths to which they will not descend’. However, the apparent realization that not all the Irish had similar problems or need for support was not reflected in suggestions for action. The ‘problems’ identified appear to have been problems for the observers as much as, or possibly more than, problems to those experiencing them and it is not at all clear whether those who, for example, were in a ‘mixed marriage’ would

⁹⁵ Letter from Daly to Duff, 21 July 1954. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, AB8/B/XIX/20g, DDA.

⁹⁶ Letter from Daly to Duff, 17 July 1954. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, AB8/B/XIX/20g, DDA.

have seen this as a problem or something for which they required intervention. The suggested remedies were vague: 'all round improvement at home', 'bringing the Irish together to provide conditions similar to home', encouraging Irish clubs and societies, and provision of hostels and advice centres. Daly was struck by the impracticality and lack of detail behind most of these suggestions, noting that he had been unable to get clarity on exactly how these projects 'might be done'. This did not surprise him, the lack of concrete plans reflected the fact that proposals to provide services for the thousands of young Irish people coming over to England each year were 'simply...fantastic'. To underline the impracticality, Daly noted that there were around 60,000 Irish people living in Birmingham alone, scattered over a wide area and with many showing reluctance to have anything to do with activities sponsored by the church.⁹⁷ Although Daly did not interview any recent Irish migrants himself, he did visit pubs and dancehalls known to be popular with the Irish to observe their behaviour and also to answer a specific question from Duff regarding patterns of alcohol consumption. He reported that while they 'drank heavily there was no drunkenness or unseemly behaviour...[or] much to which one could take exception'. The men, he observed, drank beer and the girls drank either 'light beer or a cocktail'.⁹⁸ His observations did not confirm the dire reports he had heard.

In summary, the assessments Daly obtained regarding the needs and problems experienced by Irish migrants were based on hearsay and anecdote, compounded by the habit of referring to 'the Irish' so though they were a

⁹⁷ Letter from Daly to Duff, 25 August 1954. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, AB8/B/XIX/20g, DDA.

⁹⁸ Letter from Daly to Duff, 21 July 1954. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, AB8/B/XIX/20g, DDA.

homogenous group when the evidence indicated that this was not the case. Inability to define the problems and identify which sub-groups of Irish people were experiencing them, made the proposed solutions unworkably vague and untargeted. The suggested solutions appear to have been based more on the preferences and interests of the potential providers than on objective assessment of need. Many required capital and revenue funding which was neither realistic nor sustainable. The people Daly met all had their own proposals for what should be done and do not seem to have been overly supportive of the Patrician approach. This had also been conceived in advance of any assessment of need or whether the group intended to benefit from it, young Irish people at risk of drifting from religion, would find it appealing in practice. It did, however, have one advantage in that it had virtually no capital or running costs.

McQuaid was persuaded that the Patrician idea offered the best means to encourage continued religious practice in those at risk of drifting from it. He envisaged it as part of a wider initiative to increase membership of the Legion of Mary amongst Irish migrants. He initially favoured the establishment of specifically Irish praesidia (branches) of the Legion but appreciated that this might not be well received by the existing English Legion. In 1955, the Archbishop of Westminster made it clear that he believed the best provision for Irish immigrants would be to integrate them fully within English parish structures. He would only support parallel arrangements for them where these were transitional with integration as their overall objective.⁹⁹ However, the English hierarchy was supportive of expansion of the Legion of Mary in England as a means of achieving integration, providing the resulting activities,

⁹⁹ Memorandum on Irish Emigrants in England and Wales (undated), p.10. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 3, Irish Episcopal Commission, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

including the Patricians, were open to all and not limited to an Irish membership.¹⁰⁰ Full membership of the Legion required considerable commitment, both to spiritual development and to giving volunteer service to whatever charitable work a particular praesidium identified as a local need. This level of commitment would have been unlikely to appeal to less strong Catholics at risk of drifting from the church. The Patrician movement was designed for this group and it was envisaged that the work of organizing and running it would be done by Legion members, working from local, parish-based, praesidia. The Legion would also undertake other work on behalf of Irish migrants such as meeting new arrivals at train stations in the major cities of destination.

McQuaid gave the role of extending the Legion in England to the Missionary Society of St Columban. In 1955, three Irish fathers were seconded to this work, based in premises in central London. The leader of the group was Father Aedan McGrath who had been sent by his order to work single-handed in a remote area of China in 1930. Needing to develop an active laity to support him, since neither additional priests nor religious were available, he decided, almost by chance, to set up a Legion branch as the vehicle for lay work. This was successful and in 1946 he was asked to lead the establishment of the Legion across China. Resulting conflict with the communist authorities led to his being imprisoned by them in 1951, on charges of espionage. He was released without explanation in 1954, the year before his appointment to lead the expansion of Legion work in England.¹⁰¹ He clearly, therefore, had a track record of both

¹⁰⁰ Aedan McGrath, 'Apostolate to the Irish in Britain', *The Furrow*, 10, 9 (1959), pp.560-562.

¹⁰¹ Biographical information on Aedan McGrath from the Australian website of the St Columbans Mission Society <<http://www.columban.org.au/publications/the-far-east/2008/september/captivity-ends>> (22 August 2012).

establishing and expanding Legion activity in conditions far more adverse than those in England.

The early work undertaken by the Columban fathers, travelling the country to gain support for Legion work, led them to identify groups of migrants whose needs could not easily be met through existing parishes. These included men working on large infrastructure projects (construction of motorways and power stations, for example) who were housed in workers' camps often at some distance from established parish facilities, and those working in the hotel industry in London.¹⁰² The shift patterns of the latter made religious practice difficult and the hotel environment was considered to be potentially 'sinful' (in contrast to nurses working in hospitals who experienced similar issues with shift work but were not exposed to 'the open commercialization of sin' seen in hotel premises).¹⁰³ On the Columbans' advice, McQuaid approved the establishment of special chaplaincies for camp and hotel workers in 1957, and an additional Columban Father, Edward McElroy, was appointed to lead them.¹⁰⁴ The Columban Fathers also confirmed earlier suspicions that English parishes with large influxes of Irish migrants could not provide individual pastoral care for the numbers involved. The result was a scheme to second priests from Irish dioceses to work specifically with new Irish arrivals in areas of high Irish migration.¹⁰⁵ This scheme, known as the Irish Emigrant Chaplaincy, was

¹⁰² 'Irish Workers Camps in England and Wales', anonymous, undated but from style, dates mentioned in text and position in archive, probably by Father Edward MacElroy, Columban Father seconded to work in England in 1957. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 1, 1939-1961, AB8/B/XXIX. DDA; and correspondence between McQuaid and Archbishop of Westminster, 9th, 13th and 15th January, 1958. McQuaid Papers, , Emigrants' Welfare, General Correspondence 1, 1939-1961, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

¹⁰³ Report on the Apostolate to Hotel Workers for 1962 (Mayfair, Piccadilly, Strand area). McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare, General Correspondence 2, 1962-1971, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

¹⁰⁴ McGrath, 'Apostolate to the Irish in Britain', pp.562-3.

¹⁰⁵ McGrath, 'Apostolate in Britain', p.562;

organized by direct liaison between bishops in Ireland and their counterparts in England.¹⁰⁶ These initiatives, and their outcomes, will be described in Chapter 2.

During 1955, in parallel to the extension of Legion of Mary work described above, McQuaid consolidated arrangements for the delivery of missions by Irish priests to parishes with large numbers of Irish migrants. Missions had been given in an *ad hoc* manner by members of various Irish orders in England since the 1940s. These seem to have depended largely on the initiative and enthusiasm of particular individuals. One Irish Jesuit, Father Leonard Shiel, was already well known in England, having visited regularly since 1948 to deliver missions in construction workers' camps, always arriving by motorbike. These missions were reported in the English Catholic press which noted that Shiel would turn the camp theatre into a 'temporary chapel and hear confessions back-stage'. He was credited with considerable success in 'reforming' the camps. By 1951, Shiel and colleagues were giving missions in English parishes with large numbers of Irish migrants, staying in Rowton Houses alongside 'the poorest of men'.¹⁰⁷ One mission in Birmingham had attracted considerable audiences and 'more than 3,000 workers had crammed the cathedral nightly'. Further missions

¹⁰⁶ Letter from Father Timothy Connolly, Superior General of the Columbans, to McQuaid, 19th June 1959. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare, General Correspondence 1, 1939-1961, AB8/B/XXIX/j/57, DDA. Although responsibility for secondments sat with the relevant bishops, in practice the Columbans do seem to have provided some management support for emigrant chaplains – Father Eamon Casey refers to the senior Columban in London as his 'new superior' when he, Casey, became an emigrant chaplain in Slough (see Eamonn (sic) Casey, 'Housing', *The Furrow*, 15, 9 (1964), p.557.

¹⁰⁷ Rowton Houses were working mens' hostels, founded in London by philanthropist Lord Rowton at the end of the nineteenth century. They offered the first real alternative to the casual ward at a workhouse or sleeping rough for working men of slender means. The model was copied widely until there were Rowton-type hostels in most major British cities. Information from Vauxhall Civic Society <<http://www.vauxhallcivicsociety.org.uk/history/rowton-house-bondway/>> (24 September 2012).

were planned for parishes in London.¹⁰⁸ Whilst these missions were received favourably in many quarters they were a source of tension with the organisers of existing programmes of English parish missions and were not welcomed by all parish priests. There were also no clear arrangements for the management and accountability of these activities, however well intentioned the individuals giving them may have been. McQuaid was always keen to ensure that any activities on behalf of Irish migrants undertaken by Irish Catholic organisations had an administrative framework that enabled their oversight and ultimate reporting to the Episcopal Committee, through himself. He was aware of sensitivities in England over activities that could be interpreted as delivered by the Irish for the Irish without discussion with the English hierarchy. McQuaid appointed the Enniscorthy House of Missions to co-ordinate and manage all missions to be given in England, reporting, as usual, to the Episcopal Committee through himself.¹⁰⁹ Agreement was reached with the English hierarchy that missions would be planned with the relevant English parish authorities, that care would be taken to ensure they did not compete with missions given by English orders, and that they would be given as general parish missions rather than be targeted specifically at Irish people. Their overall aim was to support the integration of Irish migrants into the life of their new home parish, in line with English hierarchy policy.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ 'Missioners lodge in Rowton House', *Catholic Herald*, 12 October 1951, p.5.

¹⁰⁹ The Enniscorthy House of Missions was run by the Missionaries of the Blessed Sacrament and had been organizing missions since 1866, see *Souvenir of the Golden Jubilee of the House of Missions, 1866-1916* (Enniscorthy, 1916).

¹¹⁰ Missions to Irish Emigrants in England and Wales, notes from the meeting of the Irish Hierarchy with Cardinal Griffin and Representatives of the of England and Wales (undated). Griffin Papers, Irish Immigrants, Gr.185, Westminster Diocesan Archive (hereafter WDA); 'Missions and Irish Immigrants', note from English Hierarchy Low Week Meeting, 1958. Godfrey Papers, Irish Immigrants, Go.2/121b, WDA.

Conclusion

By 1957, McQuaid had in place structures and processes for the expansion of Legion of Mary work with Irish migrants in England, for work with migrants who could not easily join a parish in England (camp and hotel workers) and to encourage integration into local parishes through secondment of Irish priests to parishes with high Irish migration. The delivery of these projects in practice and their outcomes will be considered in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2: ‘We are sent to the Irish’ – encouraging religious belief and practice in Irish migrants through missions, the Legion of Mary, and chaplaincy schemes, 1955 to 1972

Introduction

By the mid-1950s, McQuaid had in place structures to support Irish migrants after their arrival in England in a number of ways. These all focused on preservation of religious belief and practice as the primary objective. The Legion of Mary, through the Patrician movement, aimed to increase understanding of the Catholic faith in those whose knowledge and internalization of the faith was weak and there was acknowledgement that the cause of this was poor religious education at home. The Legion also provided a vehicle for mobilizing Catholics into voluntary work, including helping to organize the Patrician meetings and doing other work with Irish migrants, such as meeting them at railway stations or visiting them in lodging houses. Thus, the more active Catholics among the Irish became part of the solution for those drifting from religion. The two ‘special’ chaplaincies organized by the Columbans provided pastoral outreach to groups that were thought to be hard to bring within existing parish structures; and the parish missions, together with additional Irish priests seconded to areas of high Irish settlement, provided the means of drawing the Irish into local parishes alongside their English co-religionists. Each of these initiatives was managed by a relevant organization (Legion of Mary, Columbans, diocesan bishops) but all had a clear reporting line to the Irish Episcopal Committee through McQuaid. These structures proved to

be very durable. All were still active at the time of McQuaid's retirement in 1972.

Missions

The annual cycle of missions continued under the direction of the House of Missions and in accordance with the agreement reached with the English hierarchy. During the autumn of 1957, 53 Irish missions were given in dioceses across England and Wales, including Westminster, Southwark, Brentwood, Middlesex, Birmingham, Manchester, Cardiff, Leeds, Nottingham, Salford, York, Swindon, Preston and Nottingham.¹

Missions stirred considerable levels of interest in the areas in which they were held, including local news coverage, and attendances at the mission masses were high. Covering the Irish Jesuit Lent mission in 1956, the local paper described Catholics flocking to St. Peter's Church in Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, packing the church to overflowing and requiring 'extra seats to be installed'. Congregations of around 1,000 attended the evening mission services. Men and women waited 'outside the doors...for the early morning mission service. The men were mostly night workers who have come straight from the factories'. The missionaries enlivened the proceedings with a touch of theatricality - the highlight of the service was a 'dispute between the two (missioner) priests from opposing pulpits'. One priest would play the part of a disbelieving worker 'using some of the fiercest arguments against Christianity which the other endeavours to demolish'. The paper noted that as 'a large number of the congregation are Irish' the mission service on St. Patrick's day

¹ 'Irish Missions in Britain' (list of venues and dates), *The Furrow*, 8,9 (1957), pp. 603-605.

would start early to enable ‘as many as possible’ to attend.² The mission was reported as a Catholic issue rather than an Irish one. Although it was noted that the missionaries were Irish Jesuits and that a large number of the congregation were Irish, these were not the main focus of the reporting. The migrant status of the Irish was not mentioned at all. There was a class dimension to the story, with a description of the ‘dispute’ between two ‘workers’ and the mention of factory workers attending after night shift. Gender was also covered, with a description of men having to sit on the sanctuary steps or at the back of the church due to lack of room, whilst both men and women were noted as coming to the early morning service.

The priests involved in the missions were aware that whilst mass attendance could be raised during the mission it was another matter to maintain it subsequently. The ‘regular frequentation of the Sacraments by the Irish’ was one of the outcomes on which the success or otherwise of the missions was to be judged.³ Writing to Archbishop McQuaid at the close of the mission season in 1956, Father Shiel, one of the two Jesuit priests who had conducted missions across England that year, expressed his opinion that the establishment of parish confraternities was the best means to achieve this. He pointed out that the Irish Jesuits had already started twenty-five confraternities in England, which were flourishing. He went on to state that ‘we should not admit that missionaries in Britain have not tried to develop the ‘apostolic spirit’ in the Irish, and have not in fact done so.’ He stressed that it was part of the ‘ordinary duty’ of missionaries

² ‘Roman Catholics flocking to St. Peter’s Church’, *Leamington, Warwick and Kenilworth Morning News*, 16 March 1956, p.6.

³ Father L. Shiel, S.J., letter to Archbishop McQuaid, 8 May 1956. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants’ Welfare 1, 1939/61 General Correspondence, AB8/B/XXIX/1/57, DDA.

to 'build up the Apostolic spirit in the Irish...and not leave it to others'.⁴

Although Father Shiel did not mention who the 'others' might be, this could be a reference to the newly instigated scheme to promulgate the Legion of Mary as the primary vehicle for building the apostolic spirit amongst emigrants. It also suggests some tension between the long established missionaries (Father Shiel had been giving missions for 10 years at this point) and the newer Legion approach.

Over time, as the numbers of Irish people who were settled in English parishes, as opposed to new arrivals, increased the nature of the missions gradually changed. In 1958, formal agreement was reached between the English and Irish Hierarchies that the Irish Redemptorist and Passionist missionaries would work with their English counterparts to develop joint missions to parishes in both England and Ireland.⁵ Whilst this may have been good for relations between the English and Irish mission orders, it also suggests a blurring of the original purpose of the Irish missions. There is evidence that some English parish priests used the missions as an opportunity to get the help of the mission priests with some of their more challenging lapsed Catholics. The report of the 1961 mission to Balsall Heath, Birmingham, noted that this had been requested by the parish priest due to the number of social problems amongst the Irish living there. The cases encountered included 'a number of Irish girls living in concubinage with coloured men', drunkenness, family breakdown and men who had left families in Ireland for 'illicit unions with other women'.⁶ This was a different type of work to that originally proposed for the missions in terms of

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Letter from James Staunton, Bishop of Ferns, to Cardinal Griffin, 30 April 1956. Griffin Papers, Irish Immigrants, Gr.185, WDA.

⁶ Report of the Mission to Irish Emigrants, St. John's Parish, Balsall Heath, Birmingham, 24 September to 15 October 1961. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 1, 1939-1961, General Correspondence, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

refreshing parish life and encouraging the participation of newly arrived Irish migrants. It is doubtful that the mission priests would have had particular skills or training in working with issues of this sort, some of which may not have been perceived as problematic by the individuals concerned. The missions continued throughout the 1960s, although by 1969 the organisers were reporting difficulty recruiting priests to deliver them.⁷

Legion of Mary

Aedan McGrath's work to extend and develop the Legion of Mary across England is recorded in detail through the regular reports he sent back to his superior, Father Connolly. These were sent in the form of a voice recording using early Dictaphone technology. Father Connolly had them transcribed and sent to McQuaid as a series of documents entitled 'Dictabelt from Father Aedan McGrath...'. The medium in which they were created accounts for their long and conversational style.⁸ McGrath's assessment of reasons for leakage from the faith appear, not surprisingly, to have been shaped by his experiences in China. He saw the present age as one of conflict between ideologies – effectively, for him, between communism and Catholicism. He considered that the only answer to communism was 'Catholicism fully and completely lived' so that communist 'militancy' would be matched by Catholic 'apostolicism'. McGrath considered that part of the value of the Patrician approach was that it offered something to counter the Connolly Association in attracting an Irish

⁷ Letter from Father John Fitzgerald to McQuaid, 8 March 1969. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 3, General Correspondence, 1968-1971, Irish Episcopal Commission, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

⁸ Dictabelts from Father Aedan McGrath to Father Timothy Connolly, 1955-1960. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 1, 1939-1961, General Correspondence. AB8/B/XXIX/f/42-44, DDA.

membership.⁹ Although the stated aims of the Connolly Association were to work for the freedom of the Irish people, promote the teachings of James Connolly and show solidarity with oppressed nations and peoples, the Irish hierarchy considered it to be a ‘communist front’.¹⁰ Offering a Catholic alternative was therefore essential.

Patrician meetings followed a prescribed approach. They were to be organized by parish-based Legion of Mary praesidia, which meant that the establishment of a local Legion branch was necessary before a Patrician group could be formed. McGrath acknowledged openly that he drew upon the indoctrination methods he had seen used by the Chinese Communist Party in designing the format for Patrician meetings. The success of communist indoctrination lay in its ability to ‘relate theory to the ordinary lives of those taking the course’. Instead of a lecture followed by questions, there would be a ‘controlled discussion’ so that participants would go away feeling that they themselves had arrived at the intended conclusions, rather than having these forced upon them. This would offer a more effective way of internalizing religious beliefs than didactic teaching.¹¹ The success of the Patrician movement appears to have been varied. Although there were some encouraging reports such as the establishment of a praesidium and a Patrician group at the Bradwell Nuclear Research Station construction camp, there were also frequent

⁹ Father Aidan (sic) McGrath, ‘The Patrician Movement’, *The Assumptionist*, Christmas 1955, p.2.

¹⁰ Irish Democrat: History of the Connolly Association, <<http://www.irishdemocrat.co.uk/about/ca-history/>> (27 August 2011); Statement by Cardinal D’Alton reported in *The Standard*, 17 February 1956. Cutting included in McQuaid Papers, Emigrants’ Welfare 1, General Correspondence, 1939-1961, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

¹¹ McGrath, ‘The Patrician Movement’, p.2.

expressions of disappointment at both the turn-out and the quality of debate at other meetings.¹²

The work undertaken by the Legion of Mary included staple activities such as house-to-house visitation and selling Catholic newspapers. In London, the Legion ran a regular service using volunteers to meet the boat trains at Euston and provide help and advice to newly arrived Irish migrants. The British Rail management at Euston supported these activities with the provision of a room for the Legion's use.¹³ Four London praesidia concentrated on work with prostitutes, making contact with them through East End cafes and outside law courts.¹⁴ Student members of the Legion at University College, Dublin, were encouraged to give up part of their summer vacation to do volunteer work in England. This included addressing the crowds at Tower Hill, saying the rosary at Speakers' Corner and talking to people in Soho. Preparation courses were organised for these students to ensure that they were 'equipped to explain the Catholic position on faith and morals'.¹⁵ Thus, active Irish Catholics became part of the solution not only for their spiritually weaker compatriots but also for wider evangelization in England.

The Columbans were diligent in their efforts to establish an active lay apostolate through the Legion of Mary. Between 1955 and 1959, they visited 774 parishes and subsequently preached at 2,500 Masses in 404 parishes. In 1954, the year before the Columban project commenced, the English Legion had

¹² Anonymous, 'Modern Apostles', undated (but probably mid-1950s from position in archive). McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 1, General Correspondence 1939-1961, AB8/B/XXIX/f/42, DDA.

¹³ Dictabelt from Father John Casey to Father McElroy, July 1960. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 1, General Correspondence 1939-1961, AB8/B/XXIX/e/39, DDA.

¹⁴ Dictabelt from Fr McGrath to Fr Connolly, 11 February 1960. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 1, General Correspondence 1939-1961, AB8/B/XXIX/f/43, DDA.

¹⁵ Letter from John Whelan (student volunteer) to Archbishop McQuaid, 27 July 1961, and letter from Fr P O'Kane to Archbishop McQuaid, 9 March 1956. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 1, General Correspondence 1939-1961, AB8/B/XXIX/f/42, DDA.

9,533 active members and 37,934 auxilliary members in 917 praesidia.¹⁶ In 1958, this had risen to 15,910 active members and 82,151 auxilliary members in 1,608 praesidia. McGrath concluded that ‘the Lay Apostolate is the answer to the problem (of Irish migrants). Those who are apostolic are quite safe themselves and are very helpful in the parish.’ For him, the way to help Irish migrants was to make them feel needed, give them an ideal and ‘plenty of apostolic work’ to keep them busy and motivated.¹⁷

The Chaplaincies

The work of the three chaplaincies – the Camp; the Hotel and Catering Workers’; and the Irish Emigrant Chaplaincies are documented in a series of annual reports submitted to McQuaid and held in the Dublin Archdiocesan archive. Annual conferences were organized to support the priests working in the Camp, Hotel and Catering Workers and Irish Emigrant Chaplaincies. Initially, separate conferences were organized for the different strands but from 1967 priests working in the three chaplaincy schemes and the annual missions joined together to form the Emigrant Chaplains’ Association.¹⁸ The minutes of the conferences, together with annual reports from the priests working in the schemes provide a detailed history of the work between 1957 and 1971.

The Camp Chaplaincy was a response to the needs of the large numbers of Irish construction workers employed on large infra-structure projects then underway in Britain. Some of these were close to towns and the workers were housed in lodgings which could be covered by existing parish structures. This

¹⁶ Auxilliary members of the Legion of Mary did not play an active part in the lay apostolate but were committed to regular prayer for the work of their praesidium.

¹⁷ McGrath, Aedan, ‘Apostolate in Britain’, *The Furrow*, 10, 9 (1959), pp.566; 571-2.

¹⁸ Pastoral Letter of the Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland to the clergy on Emigrant Problems, 4 April 1967, *The Furrow*, 18, 6 (1967), pp.284-290.

was the case with the men employed by Tarmac on the M1 motorway construction project who were housed in a company hostel in London Colney, Hertfordshire. They received 'good [pastoral] care' from the Sacred Heart Fathers (all Irish priests from Cork) who were already running a parish in St. Albans.¹⁹ In other places, this level of care was not possible, either because the numbers were too great for the parish resources or because the project was in a rural area difficult to reach or resource from the existing parish structure. A particular problem in some parishes, particularly those in rural areas, was that the priest was elderly (often into their seventies) and single handed and thus completely unable to respond to the arrival of a large number of Catholic workers within their parish.²⁰

Reporting back to the Irish Bishops around 1957, the Columban Fathers summarised the spiritual and temporal problems experienced by migrant labour and proposed some solutions.²¹ The report noted the heterogeneous nature of the working conditions across different construction projects but noted that reliable estimates indicated that around 150,000 Irishmen were employed in the construction and civil engineering sector. Employers ranged from very large to very small concerns but two of the largest employers of Irish labour, Robert McAlpine and Sons and Messrs. Wimpey and Co. employed round 23,000 workers, of whom 75 per cent were Irish Catholics. Senior managers in both firms were themselves Irish Catholics. Labourers moved frequently from one project to another, either with the same or a different employer. Some men

¹⁹ Report from Fr MacElroy to Fr Connolly, 16 May 1958. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 1, 1939-1961, AB8/B/XXIX/e/37, DDA.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ 'Irish Workers Camps in England and Wales', anonymous and undated but from the style, dates mentioned in the text and its position in the archive, probably by Fr MacElroy, around 1957. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 1 1939-1961, AB8/B/XXIX/e/37, DDA.

would move from project to project across the country whilst others preferred to stay within one geographical location and take jobs from different contractors in that area. Accommodation arrangements varied with different projects. Large projects on remote sites tended to include provision of camps and hostels on site for the duration of the project. Where local digs and lodgings were available, companies preferred to use these, and provide transport and canteen facilities at the project site, rather than building hostel facilities.

Problems did not arise directly from the nature of the accommodation available which was 'reasonably good, but commercial and quite dreary'. However, the transient lives of workers moving from one project to another meant that they lacked activities, other than spending time in a pub, to fill their leisure hours. Living under such conditions resulted in a number of problems, of which the most frequent were 'drunkenness, bad company, depression and loneliness, irresponsibility [and] spiritual laxity'. Providing spiritual support required more than the 'mere provision of Sunday Mass', not least because they did not have 'wives or mothers [with them] to organize them to go to church'. The men gave up attending Mass not because of loss of faith but due to 'laxity and apathy'. The Columban Fathers were very successful at persuading construction camps to appoint camp chaplains who could, in effect, create a temporary parish to minister to Catholics workers. The camp chaplain's flock sometimes included the wives and children of workers who lived in caravans around construction sites. The construction companies made accommodation (often basic) and chapel facilities (sometimes no more than a hut) available for the use of the camp chaplain. In return, they often got someone who was prepared to act not just as a priest but as a general welfare officer. Chaplains

often dealt not only with religious matters but helped with a range of issues such as taking children to school, helping workers make travel arrangements, providing religious instruction for children for whom no Catholic school was available, and ‘dealing with countless personal and family problems that have no religious implications.’²² Accepting a camp chaplain could be a form of ‘enlightened self-interest’ since the presence of a priest tended to improve standards of behaviour and the chaplains were able to offer a more effective welfare service than lay welfare officers who were often distrusted by the men.²³ Two large construction companies, Wimpey and McAlpine, were supporters of the chaplaincy scheme. Other contractors refused access to the chaplains. On occasion there were tensions between the Irish Catholic chaplains and those of other denominations. One example of this arose at Trawsfynydd camp where the Anglican Industrial Missionaries would not share the chapel facilities with the Catholics despite ‘having only half a dozen people attending their services’. In this case, dedicated facilities were obtained for Catholic services.²⁴

The provision of ‘temporary parishes’ to construction camp workers continued while construction camps were a feature of the British economy. The Columban Fathers became adept at identifying projects due to start each year and allocating chaplains accordingly. In 1961, there were ten chaplains working full time with construction workers, four of whom were serving temporary

²² Father Owen Sweeney, ‘A priest gets a start: reminiscences of Llanwern’, *The Green Man*, January 1963, pp.13-15. *The Green Man* was the house journal of Robert McAlpine Ltd, a UK construction firm that had been undertaking large civil engineering projects since the 1880s. Owen Sweeney worked as the camp chaplain on the Spencer Steelworks construction project at Llanwern from 1960-1962.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Minutes of the Conference of Camp and Hotel Chaplains, November 1960 – report from Father Taffe, Trawsfynydd Camp. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants’ Welfare, General Correspondence 1, 1939-1961, AB8/B/XXIX/e/39, DDA.

construction camps.²⁵ By 1971, there were only two camps requiring chaplaincy services – one at Scunthorpe for the Anchor Project camp and one at Dungeness for the nuclear power station. Only 236 Catholic men were housed at the Anchor camp, working for McAlpine to build an access road for a British Steel plant. As the pastoral needs of these men did not occupy all the chaplain's time, he had diversified into teaching religion to 600 children in two nearby state schools.²⁶

The work of the Hotel and Catering Workers Chaplaincy was limited to central London. An attempt was made to extend it to Birmingham but this was unsuccessful.²⁷ The chaplains were accommodated in London presbyteries, with the agreement of the Archbishop of Westminster but often to the dismay of the parish clergy who felt that their presbyteries were already overcrowded without additional priests. Further tensions arose when the parish priests expected the Irish chaplains to take a full role in routine parish work, thus leaving them with little time to develop the hotel work.²⁸ These difficulties may have resulted from the fact that, as one priest wrote to McQuaid in 1963,

although the late Cardinal Godfrey gave his blessing to the scheme and I am sure favoured it – I was never quite certain whether he fully realized what it was we were trying to do. Of course, I would have been only too happy to explain had I been invited to do so, but I never was in fact asked.²⁹

In most cases, the Irish priests achieved an accommodation with their English colleagues, allowing them to help with parochial duties whilst also devoting

²⁵ List of Present Chaplains, undated but filed with conference papers for 1961. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare, General Correspondence 1, 1939-1961, AB8/B/XXIX/c/23, DDA.

²⁶ Report of the Irish Emigrant Chaplains' Conference, London, November 1971. DDA, McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare, Reports, 1959-1971, AB8/B/XXIX/c/18, DDA.

²⁷ See discussion on the Birmingham Irish Centre in Chapter 3.

²⁸ Letter from Father McElroy to McQuaid, 6th June 1961. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare General Correspondence, 1, 1939-1961, AB8/B/XXIX/e/39, DDA.

²⁹ Letter from Father Cullen to McQuaid, 17 July 1963. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare General Correspondence 2, 1962-1971, AB8/B/XXIX/e/39, DDA.

time to Irish immigrants. Occasionally, such a compromise could not be achieved. In at least one case, McQuaid himself had to seek the intervention of Cardinal Godfrey to resolve the matter.³⁰

The chaplains to the hotel and catering workers based their activities on intensive visitation. Their main source of contact was through the hotels employing Irish workers. This was dependent on the good will and co-operation of hotel owners and management. The hotel chaplains' reports provide detailed records of visits to hotels large and small across the West End and their encounters with hotel housekeepers. In some cases, housekeepers declined to meet the chaplains. Others were more forthcoming, identifying Catholics on their staff and making a room available to the chaplains in which they could meet them. On many occasions, a promise to contact the chaplains when 'visitation (of the hotel) was feasible' was not fulfilled and repeated requests were necessary to try to get a firm commitment. Efforts were made to establish a Catholic Hotel and Catering Workers Guild with the aim of 'uniting ' the estimated 10,000 Catholic hotel workers in London. As well as 'religious meetings' this offered social activities including dances and outings. This achieved some success, particularly in terms of attendance at social events, but the meetings were poorly attended. It was felt that only those who were already 'strong Catholics' made contact with the chaplains and men, in particular, were difficult to reach. Hotel managements called upon the chaplains when welfare work was required – particularly in cases of illegitimate pregnancy.³¹

³⁰ Letter from McQuaid to Cardinal Godfrey, 28 April 1962. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare General Correspondence 2, 1962-1971, AB8/B/XXIX/e/39, DDA.

³¹ Report on the Hotel and Catering Trade (West End) Apostolate, June, July to 15 August (year not stated, ?1958, from position in file). McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 1, General Correspondence, 1939-1961, AB8/B/XXIX/e/38, DDA; Report on the Apostolate to Hotel

Not all hotel workers identified as Catholics were Irish; Portuguese (particularly from Madeira) and Spanish were also seen. Most of the reports of the hotel chaplaincy speak of ‘Catholics’ rather than the Irish or even Irish Catholics. By 1963, it was being noted that the number of Irish working in hotels was falling and that the majority of the workforce was from continental Europe. By 1967, the number of hotel chaplains had fallen from three to one and it was being argued by the outgoing chaplain that a full-time replacement was not required.³² Subsequently, the Jesuits offered to second a full-time chaplain but the request was declined because it was felt that a Spanish priest would be more appropriate to the needs of the predominantly Spanish and Italian hotel workers.³³ Clearly wishing to maintain the hotel chaplaincy scheme, Father Murphy (the co-ordinator) wrote to McQuaid suggesting that ‘a happy solution to the problem would be an Irish Jesuit who speaks Spanish’. The Archbishop noted in the margin ‘but we are sent to the Irish’, indicating that the scheme should not broaden its objectives to meet the needs of a different national group for which the Irish hierarchy had no responsibility.³⁴

By 1968, the number of Irish girls working as chambermaids was reported to have fallen to low levels. They were now more likely to be found working as telephonists or receptionists, whilst Irish men were ‘trainee managers’ rather than porters. Spanish staff was now employed for the more basic housekeeping jobs and the need for continued input by Irish chaplains was therefore

Workers for 1962, Mayfair, Piccadilly, Strand Area. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants’ Welfare 2, General Correspondence, 1962-1967, AB8/B/XXIX/d/39, DDA.

³² Anonymous memo to McQuaid concerning replacement of Father Shiel, hotel chaplain based at Farm Street, 21 November 1967. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants’ Welfare 2, General Correspondence, 1962-67, AB8/B/XXIX/d/39, DDA.

³³ Letter from Father Brendan Lawler, Jesuit Provincial, to Father McMahon, 29 November 1967. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants’ Welfare 2, General Correspondence, 1962-1967, AB8/B/XXIX/d/39, DDA.

³⁴ Father Cyril Murphy to McQuaid, 29 November 1967. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants’ Welfare, General Correspondence 2, 1962-1967, AB8/B/XXIX/d/39, DDA.

questioned.³⁵ Despite the continued decline in numbers of Irish hotel workers, the chaplaincy scheme continued and the number of chaplains actually rose. In 1971 there were four hotel chaplains working in London: one Jesuit and three diocesan priests. A club had been opened in the basement of the church in Warwick Street with the support of the local parish priest. It was still being stressed that the real need was for a Spanish chaplain but that, despite promises, 'he had still not materialized.'³⁶ The continuance of the Hotel Chaplaincy for some years after the need for it began to be questioned suggests that a mechanism for re-evaluating and revising these schemes, as opposed to receiving reports, was lacking. This scheme appears to have continued simply by virtue of its established momentum beyond the point at which its original objectives had been met or the need for them had ceased.

The Irish Emigrant Chaplaincy, providing additional Irish priests on a temporary loan basis to English parishes identified as requiring extra support by the local bishop, quickly became established. By 1961, there were eight priests allocated to Westminster parishes with large numbers of Irish people, including Kentish Town in central north London and Willesden and Wembley further out in the northwest suburbs.³⁷ The number grew over the succeeding ten years as priests were increasingly seconded to work in areas of high Irish settlement such as Manchester, Salford, Birmingham and Sheffield.³⁸ In 1971, there were 46 Irish diocesan and religious priests serving in various capacities in England, a

³⁵ Report of the Irish Emigrant Chaplains' Conference, London, January 1968. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 3, General Correspondence 2, 1962-1971, AB8/B/XXIX/c/15, DDA.

³⁶ Minutes of The Irish Emigrant Chaplains Conferences – 1971: Specialized Activities Reports: Hotel Chaplains' Reports. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare, General Correspondence 2, 1962-1967, AB8/B/XXIX/c/18, DDA.

³⁷ List of Present Chaplains, undated but with conference papers for 1961. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare, General Correspondence 1, 1939-1961, AB8/B/XXIX/e/23, DDA.

³⁸ Report of the Irish Emigrant Chaplains Conferences 1971. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare, General Correspondence 2, 1962-1971, AB8/B/XXIX/c/18, DDA.

sufficient number to justify two annual conferences for them – one held in London and the other in Birmingham.³⁹

The prime objective of all the schemes was for the Irish priest to make personal contact with as many Irish immigrants as possible to encourage their continued religious practice and adherence to the sacraments. For those living in existing parishes, this was to be achieved by drawing them in to the life of the parish – integrating them within English Catholic structures in line with the English hierarchy policy. Contact was mostly made through house-to-house visitation in areas where Irish migrants were likely to find accommodation. This was a time consuming and arduous task.⁴⁰ Other activities included organising social activities, running guilds and sodalities to encourage adherence to the sacraments and supporting the lay apostolate, often through leadership of the local Legion of Mary. A particular interest was taken in marital circumstances with the aim of ensuring that marriages were regularised from the religious point of view. Priests regularly reported on the number of registry office and ‘ne temere’ marriages although whether they were able to persuade the couples involved to regularize their marriages from the Catholic point of view is unclear. Marriage to a non-Catholic partner was seen as a cause of ‘leakage’ from the church and there was a high risk that the children of such unions would not be brought up as Catholics. A related problem was the number of young Irish women living ‘in concubinage...with immigrants of other nationalities’, something which English Catholic girls were believed not to do. There were also cases of Irish men ‘abandoning their homes and contracting illicit unions

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Minutes of the Conference of Camp and Hotel Chaplains Conference, November 1960. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants’ Welfare, General Correspondence 1, 1939-1961, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

with other women.’⁴¹ ‘Constant contact and care’ was felt to be the appropriate response.⁴² Whether this was welcomed by those concerned or achieved any change is unknown. Illegitimate pregnancy was a recurring problem. In the 1950s and early 1960s, cases were usually passed to the local Crusade of Rescue. By the mid-1960s, there are reports of parish involvement in helping to furnish and decorate local authority flats provided to unmarried mothers and their children, reflecting a general societal change in attitude to unmarried motherhood.⁴³ Other recurring issues included the bad behaviour of young Irish men, usually drunkenness, and court appearances for offences including drunkenness, fighting and possession of unlicensed cars.⁴⁴ Young emigrants continued to arrive in England with no money and no arrangements for work or accommodation. Housing was also a problem although there was no mention that the Irish were actively discriminated against.⁴⁵ Although the reports from the Chaplains’ conferences repeatedly note the same social concerns year on year, there was no reporting of any concerted attempt to develop a strategic approach to tackling any of the issues. The reasons for this are not stated but may have included lack of time to develop initiatives and a lack of individuals with the skills to provide strategic leadership to respond to the issues. One emigrant chaplain who was an exception in terms of ability to identify problems

⁴¹ Report of the Mission to Irish Emigrants, St. John’s Parish, Balsall Heath, Birmingham, 24 September-15 October 1961. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants’ Welfare, General Correspondence 1, 1939-1961, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

⁴² Dictabelt from Father John Casey, September-June 1959. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants’ Welfare, General Correspondence 1, 1939-1961, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

⁴³ The Irish Emigrants Chaplains Conference, 16 December 1966, report from Father Cornelius Sayers, Salford. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants’ Welfare, General Correspondence 2, 1962-1967, AB8/B/XXIX/c/12, DDA.

⁴⁴ Minutes of the Midlands Emigrants Chaplains Conference, 5 and 6 December, 1967. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants Welfare 2, General Correspondence, 1961-1967, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

⁴⁵ Midlands Chaplains Conference, 5th and 6th December 1967. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants Welfare 2, General Correspondence, 1962-1967, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

and respond to them was Father Eamon Casey, whose work on housing and employment will be discussed later.

The chaplaincy schemes seem to have been well received in England although there were recurring problems. The Irish bishops tended to second to England priests who were not currently needed in their home diocese. They would then recall them suddenly as the need arose. This, not surprisingly, discouraged English parish priests from accepting an Irish chaplain 'for fear that [their work] will all end as suddenly as it began'.⁴⁶ There were occasions when the behaviour of individual priests caused problems. Father Michael Cleary, who worked in the mid-1960s in the Hotel Chaplaincy was initially praised by Cardinal Heenan for his forbearance with a particularly difficult London priest.⁴⁷ However, Cleary subsequently fell from grace. He attracted coverage in English newspaper gossip columns for his attendance at society parties where his fondness for singing whilst accompanying himself on the guitar earned him the nickname 'the Singing Priest'. An invitation for him to appear on an Irish television programme, the *Late Late Show*, was frowned upon by McQuaid.⁴⁸ At the end of 1966, Cardinal Heenan, who had previously regarded him as 'a bit of a saint' was asking McQuaid to recall him. McQuaid readily agreed, responding 'I am grateful for your note on Father Cleary...Singing priests and nuns are not in our line...it is high time for Father Cleary to come home...The

⁴⁶ Father McElroy to McQuaid, 7 February 1962. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare, General Correspondence 2, 1962-1971, AB8/B/XIX, DDA.

⁴⁷ Correspondence between McQuaid and Cardinal Heenan, 12 and 18 March 1965. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare, General Correspondence 2, 1962-1971, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

⁴⁸ The *Late Late Show* was, and still is regarded as Ireland's 'most popular and prestigious' television show. A two-hour chat show in format, it started in 1962 and has just celebrated its 50th anniversary, see <http://www.rte.ie/tv/programmes/the_late_late_show.html> (8 September 2012).

next man will not be a songster – neither a minstrel.’⁴⁹ Cleary went on to a career in Dublin where he continued to ‘sing and play his guitar’ as a ‘showbiz cleric’. After his death, he was the centre of scandal after it emerged that he had fathered two children with his housekeeper.⁵⁰

On occasion Irish priests took the opportunity of being away from their home diocese to claim entitlement to larger amounts of leave than was their due.⁵¹ Sometimes Irish bishops or heads of orders used placement in England as a way of ‘loosing’ a priest who, due to personality factors, had proved difficult to place at home. Such a case arose with a Jesuit, Father P, who had been placed in a parish in Birmingham. He had proved unsuitable and this should have been foreseen as Father P was well known in his order. Furthermore, despite having been asked to leave the parish in Birmingham, Father P was still seeking emigrant work because ‘the problems had not been discussed with him by his Provincial’, suggesting that the support given to the chaplains was not always optimal.⁵²

Over time, the ratio of settled Irish people to new arrivals shifted to favour the former over the latter. This was particularly so after the peak of Irish migration in the late 1950s with a shift to much lower levels during the 1960s.⁵³ The work of the emigrant chaplains attached to parishes reflected this. Visitation of new arrivals and settled but lapsed Irish Catholics continued to be a

⁴⁹ Letter from McQuaid to Cardinal Heenan, 2 December 1966. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants’ Welfare, General Correspondence 2 1961-1971, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

⁵⁰ David MacKittrick, ‘The secret life of Michael Cleary (entertainer, radio-show host, father of two ...and priest)’, *The Independent*, 11 September 2007 [consulted at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/the-secret-life-of-michael-cleary-entertainer-radio-show-host-father-of-two-and-priest-401971.html> (25 August 2012)].

⁵¹ Letters from Father Cullen to McQuaid, 17 and 24 August 1963. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants’ Welfare 2, General Correspondence 1962-1971, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

⁵² Letter from Father Murphy to McQuaid, 7 February 1969. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants’ Welfare, General Correspondence 2, 1962-1971, AB8/B/XIX, DDA.

⁵³ Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, p.230.

mainstay of the chaplains' work – so much so that it was regarded as 'a grace akin to a sacrament'. It was also noted that visitation work with the lapsed often 'made no headway'.⁵⁴ More time was spent on running parish activities such as parish councils, youth clubs, Scout groups, the Legion of Mary, catechesis groups, teaching in schools and so on. In some parishes, the Irish formed a clear majority of the parishioners, for example, 95 per cent in Aston Birmingham; 70 per cent in Cricklewood; 65 per cent in Wembley; and 80 per cent in Castle Street, Luton. The second Luton parish, Beech Hill, was 'very Irish' and was served only by two emigrant chaplains with no substantive parish priest.⁵⁵ Thus, although the policy of the English had always been to integrate the Irish into English parishes, it appears that simply due to the large numbers of Irish people in some parishes, these must inevitably had an 'Irish' rather than an 'English' character.

By the early 1970s, the Irish chaplains were trying to respond to the problem of children of Irish immigrants drifting from the church. These young people had often been born and bred in England and their levels of leakage were similar to those of other young Catholics in England. Culturally, they appear to have been similar to their English counterparts – the chaplains noted their fondness for the 'music of Jethro Tull', something which appears to have been difficult for the priests to understand.⁵⁶ The work of the chaplains had, therefore, shifted from outreach to new migrants with a view to integrating them into English parishes, to one of on-going ministry in parishes with large, settled Irish

⁵⁴ Report of the Irish Emigrant Chaplains' Birmingham Conference, November 1971. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 3, General Correspondence 1968-1971, AB8/B/XXIX. DDA.

⁵⁵ Report of the Irish Emigrant Chaplains' Conference, London, November 1971. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 3, General Correspondence 1968-1971, AB8/B/XXIX. DDA.

⁵⁶ Report of the Irish Emigrant Chaplains' Conference, London, November 1971. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 3, General Correspondence 1968-1971, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

populations. This shift appears to have happened by gradual evolution rather than through any deliberate policy change. The shift in emphasis from new migrants to work with settled parishioners led some chaplains to question whether the term ‘emigrant chaplain’ was still appropriate or whether their main function had become one of ‘sacristy curate’. However, since chaplains had considerable discretion to determine the nature of their ‘apostolate’ within their parishes according to local circumstances, it was concluded that title or status ‘did not matter very much’.⁵⁷ The work of the Emigrant Chaplaincy continued to evolve as the needs of Irish people in Britain changed over the years. Currently (2012), the Irish Chaplaincy in Britain (the direct successor of the Emigrant Chaplaincy established in 1957) continues to respond to the needs of Irish people in Britain through projects targeted on three specific groups: Irish seniors, Irish travellers and Irish prisoners.⁵⁸

Developing policy from parish level – Father Eamon Casey, the Catholic Housing Aid Society and ‘responsible migration’

The work of one emigrant chaplain, Father Eamon Casey, demonstrates the extent to which those working at operational level could assume strategic leadership and drive policy development and implementation. Father Casey was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Kerry in 1951. Whilst working in Limerick as Curate in St. John’s Cathedral Parish and teaching in the Upper Technical School, he realised that many young people were leaving the parish to work in England and that many seemed unprepared for the realities of such a move. He

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Information from the Irish Chaplaincy in Britain website:
<http://www.irishchaplaincy.org.uk/Groups/160517/Irish_Chaplaincy_in/Our_Work/Our_Work.aspx> (25 August 2012).

made contact with Irish priests working in England and particularly with Father Tom McNamara, the Irish-born priest who had been instrumental in setting up the London Irish Centre in Camden. As a result, he set up an emigrant office in Limerick city where intending migrants could get advice on work and accommodation in England and be put in touch with an Emigrant Chaplain near their destination in England.⁵⁹

In 1960, Casey was seconded by the Bishop of Limerick to work as an Emigrant Chaplain in England. He was attached to the parish in Slough at the request of the parish priest. Slough then had a population of around 100,000, of which 14,000 were Irish, out of a total Catholic population of 17,000. Casey's approach when he arrived in Slough was to identify the 'special needs and special problems' of the Irish community which were not addressed by existing parish institutions. Poverty was not a problem. The Irish were drawn to Slough by the availability of well-paid factory work: 1,500 worked for Mars and many more were dispersed across 300 other factories. The most pressing problem, the availability of adequate housing, turned out to be a problem that was not restricted to the Irish.⁶⁰

The shortage of adequate accommodation was greatest for those with families, particularly those starting a family. Young married couples found it relatively easy to rent accommodation but this was commonly conditional on there being no children. This rule was rigidly enforced, with couples being evicted on the birth of their first child. The options then available to them were

⁵⁹Brid Ni Loideain, "Saving is the Key to Owning Your Own Home", Interview with Bishop Eamon Casey' (unpublished oral history project for National University of Ireland, Galway - undated but probably around 2006, after Casey's return to Galway, based on Casey's recollection), p.2.

⁶⁰ Eammon [sic] Casey, "Housing" – Eamonn Casey in conversation with Peter Lemass', *The Furrow*, 15, 9 (1964), p.557.

few – either to accept grossly inadequate housing (Casey cites an example of a couple with three children living in just two rooms – one a ‘normal sized bedroom and the other what we would call a box-room’). Others were forced to camp out with relatives for a considerable time – ‘with all the consequent dangers’. Casey does not elaborate on these dangers, but they probably included the temptation to use birth control. Those failing to find any accommodation for their families risked having their children taken into care by the local council.⁶¹ At best, families could face paying an exorbitant rent, making household budgeting difficult and saving impossible. Little help was to be had from the local council, which had a backlog of applicants on its existing waiting list. Many Irish families were not able even to join the queue since they had not been in the area long enough to qualify.⁶²

Casey hit upon an innovative way to tackle the problem as a result of a chance remark by a family who were leaving Slough having been evicted from unsuitable accommodation. They wanted to move to Bristol where they would be able to buy a house on a mortgage with a down payment of £200. Casey was instrumental in arranging a loan for them and a house was duly purchased. Clearly, if this approach could work once, it was capable of being developed further. The problem was not that the Irish were poor, most had good incomes and were willing to save a deposit for house purchase. However, they were excluded from obtaining finance in England because they were unknown to the banks and building societies who offered loans and mortgages, had no referees

⁶¹ The practice of paying English families to ‘board’ one’s children, noted as being common in the Nigerian community as a response to housing problems by Camden Community Relations Council does not seem to have been a strategy used to any extent by the Irish. See: Annual General Meeting of the Camden Committee for Community Relations Minutes, 7 July 1966. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Camden Committee for Community Relations, 1965-1969, B100/20, NAI.

⁶² Casey, ‘Housing’, p.558.

who could vouch for their good standing and they had not been in the country long enough to establish any credit history.⁶³

Casey's solution was to establish what he called the Bank Loan Scheme. The seed corn for this was a legacy of £1,000 he had recently received from his father.⁶⁴ He approached the bank with which the parish held its account and negotiated a scheme whereby, against the security of the £1,000, the bank would extend loans of £400 to clients referred by the church, who had already saved £400 for a house deposit. The bank agreed to advance loans up to a total sum of £5,000. As loans were paid off, further ones could be offered to more individuals. In this way, a considerable amount of leverage was achieved with the original deposit.

There were a number of reasons why Casey opted to use his £1,000 through the bank rather than using it to finance loans through a church-based charity model. Firstly, as shown above, because it enabled the money to be leveraged and thus generate a considerably larger fund than if loans had been granted solely out of the capital sum. Secondly, Casey felt that it was important from 'a psychological point of view' that individuals should have a clear obligation to a commercial body rather than feeling that they had received a hand out from a charity. Thirdly, using the bank considerably reduced the amount of work that Casey would have to cover – the bank maintained all the records and provided him with regular reports. His role was thereby reduced to reviewing the reports and taking action only on cases where there was difficulty with repayments.⁶⁵

⁶³ Ni Loideain, 'Saving is the key', p.2.

⁶⁴ Eamon Casey, interview with the author, 9 October 2009. In *The Furrow* interview, Casey mentions the sum but only that it came from 'an interested individual' (Casey, 'Housing', p.562).

⁶⁵ Casey, 'Housing', p. 558.

Casey's increasing knowledge of the mortgage market led him to realise that the mortgage products offered by different banks and building societies varied considerably. To guide people through these complexities and find the mortgage product best suited to them, Casey established the Mortgage Advisory Scheme, which brought together the professional expertise of a mortgage broker, a solicitor and an estate agent. All were members of the parish who volunteered their services. The three would interview would-be house purchasers and advise them on their prospects for obtaining a mortgage and which providers would be most suitable to approach.⁶⁶

These initial schemes were best suited to those who were already well on the road to having a deposit. Casey's next schemes were therefore directed at groups who did not currently have any savings. The first group was those who were currently in rented accommodation and who, with support, could now start to save towards their own home. For them, a Savings and Investment Scheme was started. Their employment, income and expenditure patterns were analysed, their potential for saving was assessed and advice was given on the savings pattern that they would need to follow to generate a house deposit if they joined the scheme. The value of this scheme lay in the hope that it gave people that they could move on from the less than satisfactory conditions of their rented accommodation. Whilst it could be argued that individuals wanting to save could do so by accessing a bank or building society direct, Casey believed the value of his scheme lay in meeting the specific needs of this group. Firstly, the opening hours of banks and building societies made it difficult for factory workers and, particularly, construction workers who might be working away

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.559.

from home, to access them. Casey realised how important it was that people could bank their savings on the day they were paid. If they could do that, they would save 'from their wage packet'. If they had to wait to get to a bank several days later, they would only save from 'what was left over'. Secondly, regular contact with people who were encouraging them to save and reminding them of their goal was important in encouraging continuing saving.⁶⁷

The money lodged with the Savings and Investment Scheme was invested, on behalf of each saver, in both a bank and a building society account. By this means, savers were able to establish themselves as stable individuals who would be a good credit risk for a future loan. It also served to establish their savings capacity, something that, Casey argued, was not always a simple function of their income. Knowledge of the individual's saving and expenditure habits over time would be useful to a building society manager to determine the level of any mortgage advanced.⁶⁸

The second group requiring specific help was those who had no current accommodation, were being evicted or were paying such a high rent that they had no hope of establishing any regular savings. For these individuals, the Temporary Flat or Halfway House Scheme was set up. A chance meeting with Maisie Ward Sheed put Casey in touch with the Catholic Housing Aid Society (CHAS) of which Sheed was the founder and president.⁶⁹ Casey had identified a suitable large house, which could be converted into five flats for rent within the Halfway House Scheme, and CHAS contributed towards the purchase costs.⁷⁰ The building work was done by volunteers from the parish who worked in the

⁶⁷ Casey, 'Housing', p.560.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p.561.

⁶⁹ Maisie Ward Sheed was a prominent English Catholic and ran the Catholic publishing firm, Sheed and Ward, with her husband Frank.

⁷⁰ Casey, 'Housing', p.562.

construction industry.⁷¹ The principle of the scheme was that it had to cover its costs. On that basis, families were offered a flat at a rent of £4.10 per week – which compared very favourably with the £5 per week many had been paying for a single room. Of this, £3 was required to cover the costs of the scheme and the remaining 30s was placed in a compulsory savings scheme. At the end of a year, the tenant would have a savings pot of nearly £100. Technically, the full £4.10s was collected as rent, and the scheme was therefore under no obligation to return the savings element to the tenant. Once they had sufficient saved to negotiate a mortgage, the tenant was expected to move on. Should an individual use the scheme ‘for selfish motives’ and not move on, the scheme would not have returned the savings element. Casey’s experience was that this did not happen in a single case during his time with the scheme.⁷²

Access to Casey’s schemes was not limited to the Irish or solely to Catholics. Although he did not set out to advertise them to the wider community, knowledge of them spread by word of mouth and individuals approached him directly. Casey did not experience opposition from the Irish hierarchy for opening his scheme beyond the Irish, or even Catholic, community, something he ascribed to the fact that the hierarchy ‘couldn’t [be critical] when you think of all the Irish people I helped’.⁷³

The schemes described so far were ways of helping those who, with the right support, could help themselves. As Casey described them, they were people who ‘were into jobs, their family was settled and they were all people who intended to settle [in England].’⁷⁴ This left Casey open to the charge that he was

⁷¹ Casey, interview with the author, 9 October 2009.

⁷² Casey, ‘Housing’, p.561.

⁷³ Casey, interview with the author, 9 October 2009.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

encouraging the Irish to settle permanently in Britain. His riposte to this was that persistent uncertainty about long term intentions often led people to avoid saving and establishing themselves in England. The result was that ‘they finished up at the age of about forty without having a foot either in England or in Ireland’. Had they decided to make a future in England and purchased a house, they would then have had an appreciable asset to cash in had they subsequently decided to return to Ireland.⁷⁵

Not all the Irish people Casey worked with in Slough were able to benefit from these schemes due to social or mental health problems. Casey would try to find lodgings for single Irish people with parishioners, a scheme which worked well in integrating the new comers and in providing welcome additional income for those who offered them a room. Householders with spare rooms trusted Casey to send them prospective lodgers who ‘wouldn’t break the ... place up’. Because of this trust, they would often accept people who they would not have accepted had they approached them directly. Nonetheless, there were people whose problems made them inappropriate to help in this way and these Casey referred on to the local social services with which he worked closely. He would continue to support individuals who were receiving social services input and would also liaise with other local voluntary agencies. He considered that his involvement with these cases meant that local agencies would accept and help clients who they might not have accepted without his involvement.⁷⁶

Casey’s meeting with Maisie Ward Sheed led to a change in direction for him. At that time, CHAS had been established for around seven years and operated a model of raising funds that were then loaned out interest free direct to

⁷⁵ Casey, ‘Housing’, p.567.

⁷⁶ Casey, interview with the author, 9 October 2009.

individuals to fund house purchase. Casey was invited on to the Board and the models developed in Slough were adopted. To oversee this, Casey was released by his Bishop to act as National Director. In Slough, all the work to support the schemes including supervising the flats, collecting rent, administering the savings schemes and the professional advisory input was all done on a voluntary basis, with many of the volunteers being Irish. The voluntary model was replicated in CHAS where, apart from two paid secretarial staff, the majority of the work, including interviewing potential clients, book keeping and office management, was done by volunteers.⁷⁷

The housing needs of workers in London differed from those in Slough, mainly due to the high property prices making ownership an unrealistic goal for many. This led to the development of two schemes – one designed to facilitate property purchase in London, the other designed to facilitate relocation to cheaper areas of the country. The former was a scheme run in conjunction with the London County Council whereby tenants could rent a maisonette from CHAS for three years and subsequently purchase it with help from the Council. The second scheme rested on liaison between the London office and its national branches to identify areas where job prospects were good and house prices considerably lower than in London. Families in London were then supported to relocate. A third scheme aimed to help ‘fatherless families, ... either widows or wives who have been deserted by their husbands’. This was a joint scheme with the Ursuline convents whereby CHAS would help them with house purchase

⁷⁷ Casey, ‘Housing’, p.564.

and conversion to flats and set up a funding model. The scheme was then run by the Ursulines, independent of CHAS.⁷⁸

As with the schemes in Slough, the CHAS initiatives were not limited to Catholics alone, although in practice, most applicants were Catholic and about 75 per cent were Irish. Casey ascribed the high percentage of Irish as being due to their large families. In principle, CHAS were willing to help anybody and never ‘inquire[d] what anyone’s religion is.’ In addition, CHAS volunteers were not all Catholic. Asked why, then, the society ‘continue[d] with the label Catholic’ Casey argued this on two grounds. Firstly, he believed it important to have a community, with solidarity and vigour, behind the initiative. Secondly, non-Catholics coming in to help a Catholic agency did not create tension with the principles of the organisation being based on Catholic teaching. If it had been based on a non-Catholic ‘platform’ there could be ‘a difference in principle at source and where this occurs in any committee effectiveness suffers.’⁷⁹

In 1966, Bruce Kenrick approached CHAS, and similar schemes run by the Anglican and Baptist churches, with a view to co-ordinating fund raising. Kenrick had established a co-ordinated programme in the US and saw an opportunity to do something similar in England. His proposal was to set up an ‘umbrella’ fundraising body which he would administer which would relieve the individual charitable organisations of the need to commit time and effort to fund raising, leaving them free to concentrate on working with their clients. The plan was welcomed by the different agencies and led to the inception of Shelter. Fortuitously, the initiative was launched just as the film ‘*Cathy Come Home*’,

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.564.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.567.

which focused on homelessness, was released. This enhanced the publicity and initial support for the Shelter scheme.⁸⁰

Although the initiative had the strong support of its constituent agencies, things did not run smoothly, largely due to personality issues within the organisation. From the start, it had been planned to bring in a senior manager to run the business. However, as Casey put it, ‘it takes a long time to find the right man for a job like that’. In the event, it took 18 months before New Zealander Des Wilson was appointed and in the meantime Kenrick was in charge. During his tenure, he appointed staff on the basis of their religious affiliation rather than their competence. On his arrival, Wilson was faced with the task of managing these personnel issues and parting company with those who were unsuitable – about two thirds of the total. Clearly unhappy with this, Kenrick approached Casey for his support in firing Wilson. The grounds he advanced for this were based on allegations about Wilson’s private life. Casey considered this firstly to be no business of Kenrick’s and secondly, that had he concerns about the matter he should have spoken directly to Wilson before coming to him. Casey reported the matter to the Board and as a result Kenrick resigned and Casey was appointed Chairman.⁸¹ Casey continued in this role, developing the initiatives described above, until his return to Ireland.⁸²

Casey was also behind the establishment of the Marian Employment Agency in Kilburn. This initiative grew out of his work in Limerick before he moved to Slough. He was concerned that too many young Irish people made the move to England without any planning and without securing suitable accommodation

⁸⁰ Casey, interview with the author, 9 October 2009; Ni Loideain, ‘Saving is the Key’, pp.10-11.

⁸¹ Casey, interview with the author, 9 October 2009; and Ni Loideain, ‘Saving is the Key’, pp.10-11.

⁸² Ibid.

and employment beforehand. The Marion Employment Agency aimed to encourage 'responsible migration'. Operating from a bureau in Kilburn, it was run by a professional personnel manager, and acted as a recruitment and accommodation agency. Irish people arriving in London could access the bureau but another objective was that the bureau would establish links with 'emigrant bureaux' in parishes in Ireland so that, wherever possible, individuals would obtain jobs and accommodation before coming to England. Casey developed this scheme in conjunction with Father John Dore, Oblate Father and parish priest of Sacred Heart Parish in Kilburn. Office accommodation was provided by the Oblate Fathers but running costs had to be met from the proceeds of the recruitment agency business. Fees were charged to employers using the service but not to applicants.⁸³ Casey encouraged the establishment of a network of 'emigrant bureaux' attached to parishes across Ireland and also established an annual conference on emigration, sponsored by the Bishop of Limerick, which aimed to bring together those working with migrants and to update them on conditions for employment and accommodation in England. One problem faced by the agency was the difficulty of establishing and maintaining active bureaux across Ireland. Expecting parishes to set up and maintain such initiatives was an ambitious aim, given the level of leadership and voluntary input required to do this successfully. Many of the emigrant advice bureaux that parishes did set up quickly became 'moribund' and the Emigrant Chaplains' Association called for a 'national federation' to support them.⁸⁴ This proposal was not supported by McQuaid and Barrett, who feared that such a

⁸³ Casey, interview with the author, 9 October 2009.

⁸⁴ Minutes of the Emigrant Chaplains' Association, Athlone Meeting, 26 December 1968. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 3, General Correspondence, 1968-1971, Irish Episcopal Commission, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

federation would ‘absorb’ and ‘downgrade’ the role of the CSWB. Accordingly, McQuaid blocked any ‘affiliation’ of the CSWB with the proposed federation, or representation on the federation council.⁸⁵ The proposal for a federation was not progressed. The Marian Agency continued until 1974 when a combination of falling revenue from potential recruiters and a fall in the number of Irish migrants coming to England, both reflective of a worsening economic situation, meant that it was no longer viable or needed.⁸⁶

The initiatives set up by Casey during his time in England demonstrate an unusual capacity for leadership and strategic vision complementing considerable financial acumen and negotiating skill. All were set up in such a way that they could, and did, continue beyond Casey’s direct involvement with them, which ended after his recall to Ireland, and appointment as Bishop of Kerry, in 1969. He was able to extend the remit of the Irish chaplaincy considerably beyond its intended framework without incurring criticism from either the Irish or English hierarchies. The model he favoured was based on ‘supported self-help’, something that has echoes with the approach of nineteenth century social reformers and, in particular, the model followed by the Charity Organisation Society. His savings schemes followed much the same model as the ‘penny banks’ and other savings initiatives, which were part of the fabric of social schemes organised by evangelical clergy in the nineteenth century. O’Grada argues that such schemes did not take root in Ireland at that time, so Casey may not have been consciously building on previous models when establishing his

⁸⁵ Letter from McQuaid to Barrett, 28 December 1968. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants’ Welfare 3, General Correspondence, 1968-1971, Irish Episcopal Commission, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

⁸⁶ Casey, letter to the author, 15 March 2010.

own schemes.⁸⁷ His schemes were in line with Catholic social teaching, which would not have encouraged looking to the state to provide the solution to the problem.

Casey's focus differed from that of the Irish hierarchy in that the latter prioritised the spiritual welfare of migrants over the social or physical on the basis that safeguarding the former would enable individuals to make the right choices to maintain the latter themselves. Casey argued that inadequate accommodation could lead to failure in religious practice, for example, if birth control were to be used by a married couple unable to house a family. Casey went on to extend CHAS to all those experiencing housing need, whatever their religious background. He had a clear strategic vision of the needs of migrants starting with the development of young people in Ireland who, whether one liked it or not, were likely to emigrate in large numbers. He shared many of the stereotyped views of the nature of working-class Irish people, noting, for example, that the Irish in Slough all knew the location of three institutions: the church, the Mars factory and the pub.⁸⁸ Like many of those working with Irish migrants, he believed that the problems experienced, particularly by young Irish male migrants stemmed from the Irishman's 'inferiority complex'. He argued that this could be alleviated by work with young people in Ireland that would teach them the 'social graces'. For this, he advocated the setting up of parish youth groups which the young people would run themselves, and through them organise for themselves a programme that might include tuition in dancing and domestic activities. He also advocated that young people in Ireland should receive thorough sex education and he was careful to couch this advice within

⁸⁷ Cormac O'Grada, 'Savings Banks as an institutional import: the case of nineteenth-century Ireland', *Financial Services Review*, 10 (2003), p.32.

⁸⁸ Casey, interview with the author, 9 October 2009; Ni Loideain, 'Saving is the Key', p.7.

an acceptable Catholic framework, linking it to the work of the Catholic Marriage Guidance Association.⁸⁹ His assessment of the underlying causes of the difficulties that some young Irish migrants got into through their behaviour in England was not innovative, based as it was on the cliché of the ‘inferiority complex’ (whatever that might mean). However, his solutions were innovative in that they stressed the need for action in Ireland to stop the problems arising and were based on giving skills to young people to empower them to take responsibility for themselves and make better decisions. This was far less paternalistic than the approach of many others working with young migrants who stressed the need to keep them within a Catholic environment as the solution. The influence of Casey’s thinking on ‘responsible emigration’ was evident in the Irish bishops’ 1967 pastoral letter addressed to all priests on the subject of emigration. This letter acknowledged the likelihood that emigration would continue and that priests had a duty to ensure that those who might emigrate were fully prepared to do so. The need to strengthen both religious formation and social skills through education and youth work in parishes, in order to develop young people who were better able to make decisions about migrating and adjust to life in an industrial society, was stressed. The value of this training for those who did emigrate would be the avoidance of an ‘inferiority complex’ which could cause them to become ‘anti-social or aggressive and bitter’ abroad.⁹⁰ The overall aim of work with young people was to ‘teach the faith in a way that will enable [them] to absorb its truth’ and apply its standards to their own lives.⁹¹ Thus the overall aim of making young Irish

⁸⁹ Eamon Casey, ‘The Pastoral on Emigration’, *The Furrow*, 18 (1967), pp.245-256.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.287.

⁹¹ Pastoral Letter of the Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland to the clergy on Emigrant Problems, 4 April 1967, *The Furrow*, 18 (1967), p.287.

people self-regulating against an internal Catholic moral compass remained unchanged, but the emphasis for achieving it was now shifted to Ireland and an earlier point in the life-cycle.

Casey's work demonstrates the ways in which an individual with strategic vision, leadership and other practical skills could develop initiatives within the interstices of an existing institutional and policy framework without coming into conflict with the Irish or English hierarchy.

Conclusion

In summary, the years 1940 to 1972 saw a move from the *ad hoc* responses to reports of Irish migrant welfare problems, nearly all focused on moral welfare of female emigrants, which had characterized the previous decade. The shift to a proactive portfolio of services, initially in Dublin and subsequently extended to England, resulted from the interest of McQuaid in migrant issues and the administrative ability and strategic leadership he brought to the work. The administrative structures he put in place enabled the sustainable delivery of services by a range of Catholic organisations but with ultimate reporting to the Bishops Committee on the Care of Emigrants, through McQuaid. This strategic oversight enabled McQuaid to give detailed accounts of Irish hierarchy work on behalf of migrants to the Superior Consistorial Congregation in Rome, as he was periodically required to do.⁹²

The administrative structures McQuaid created, his co-ordination of a number of different Irish Catholic organisations to provide a range of services in Ireland and England and his work with the English hierarchy to achieve agreement to

⁹² Copy of a letter from HE Cardinal Mimmi (Sacra Congregazione Concistoriale) to HE Cardinal D'Alton, 27 November 1958. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 3, Irish Episcopal Commission, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

the Irish delivery of services in England were innovative. However, the ways in which the needs of Irish migrants were understood and the services that were considered appropriate to meet their needs fitted within well-established paradigms of spiritual and moral welfare. Safeguarding religious belief and practice was seen as the key to avoiding temporal, social and physical problems. Those who maintained religious belief and practice would regulate their behaviour to avoid problems. Those who did not were identifiable by their behaviour – drunkenness, petty criminality, cohabitation, illegitimate pregnancy and prostitution. It is often not clear from the records whether ‘problem behaviours’ were of concern due to their detrimental impact on the individuals exhibiting them or whether the concern was more around the potential for ‘scandal’ to the Catholic church and the poor light in which they cast Irish Catholicism, in particular.

There was acknowledgement that lapsation from faith and social difficulties had their roots in Ireland. Some of this was ascribed to failures in the education system but a recurring theme was that problems were due to the ‘Irishman’s inferiority complex’. This term was used repeatedly over the years by a range of commentators. None attempted to define what they meant by it or to present any evidence for its existence or for its utility as a concept in understanding the needs of migrants or how to respond to them. Another feature that resulted in an inability to articulate exactly what the problems faced by Irish migrants were was the almost universal habit of referring to ‘the Irish’ as though they were one homogeneous group. There was little attempt to categorise them by educational level, socio-economic class or gender. The impression emerges that ‘the Irish’ generally referred to young, poorly educated, unskilled Irish men. However,

since this was never specified, to infer this may be crediting the thinking of those using this term with more clarity than perhaps it merits. Where women were concerned, the issues were invariably around ‘moral welfare’ – cohabitation, particularly with ‘coloured’ men, illegitimate pregnancy and prostitution. Since the problems faced by Irish migrants were defined only partially or not at all, it is not surprising that the solutions proposed were also often vague. Those proposing ‘Irish Centres’, ‘bureaux’ or ‘hostels’ often seem to have thought little beyond the provision of a building. There was rarely any detailed thinking about exactly what services would be offered and how complex tasks such as running accommodation and employment services and dealing with a potentially demanding clientele (the drunk, the aggressive, the disturbed and so on) would be supported in practice. Crucially, most of these proposals showed no realization of the capital and running costs involved or any sources of funding. Those working with the Irish in England at the time of Hubey Daly’s visit seemed long on vague proposals and very short on practical action.

Against this background, McQuaid made safeguarding religious belief and practice the overall aim of work for Irish migrants. This was an extension of the aim of the work already established in Dublin through the CSWB. The system McQuaid set up giving different aspects of work with migrants to different Irish religious organisations, all reporting through him to the Irish bishops, required no new funding and, once established, continued to function with minimal intervention from himself or the bishops for many years. Although as an organizational plan, this could indicate that ‘command and control’ sat with McQuaid, in fact his role was one of oversight. Rather than being centralized

through him, power was actually diffused throughout the network of services with considerable discretion sitting with the individual organisations and down to individuals working within them. McQuaid appears to have intended this. His inaugural speech to the CSWB gave wide discretion to the management committee and he seems to have been genuinely disappointed when they failed to provide strategic leadership. Individuals with the skills to identify areas of need and design sustainable services to meet them were allowed to do so – Eamon Casey being the prime example. Casey's projects differed from those of others in having clear and manageable objectives, good management structures and sustainable financial plans. The establishment of the Emigrant Chaplains' Association was an explicit attempt to encourage more innovative thinking and transfer of good ideas across the services in England.

One element missing from McQuaid's design was a system for reviewing the results of the interventions, monitoring changing conditions and reviewing the services against them. From its early days, the Hotel Workers Chaplaincy was reporting that the number of Irish workers was falling and that their services were only attracting those who were already strong Catholics. Despite this, the Chaplaincy continued and expanded, demonstrating the tendency of organisations, once established, to keep going down their original path, in this case through an extension of their original mission to the Irish to other nationalities. Similarly, by the late 1960s, the Emigrant Chaplains were acting as additional curates to support parishes with large numbers of settled Irish people, and often their teen-age or young adult children, in place of their original mission of outreach to new arrivals. This may well have had the tacit support of the English since it relieved them of the need to plan for and resource

these expanded, or in some cases new, parishes, but it was a significant and unplanned shift from the original aim of the chaplaincy.

Chapter 3: ‘We are one community’: The English Catholic Hierarchy Response to Irish Migrants, 1955 - 1972

Introduction

In 1955, Cardinal Griffin, Archbishop of Westminster and President of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, made a clear statement of the policy the English hierarchy would follow in respect of Irish migrants. The policy was promulgated through two public addresses given that year, one in January and the second during Lent. Both hierarchies shared the view that full integration of the Irish within English parishes was the ultimate aim. However, the Irish hierarchy had taken the view that separate services, such as missions and Legion of Mary groups specifically for the Irish, would be required as the first stage in safeguarding religious faith and practice before integration could be achieved. The timing of Griffin’s statements was in response to approaches from the Irish Bishops seeking to establish missions to the Irish. Prior to 1955, the English Bishops had had no formal policy on the issue, largely because they had not seen any need for one. This chapter will consider the policy adopted by the English Bishops and the background to it. It will then look at initiatives for work with Irish migrants that had their origins in England, rather than Ireland, particularly the establishment of Irish centres in London and Birmingham. The development of the Birmingham Irish Centre was explicitly within the English Bishops’ policy framework. However, the London Irish Centre developed along lines that clearly ran counter to the overall policy, in that it maintained the Irish as a separate group. The reasons why these services were allowed to develop and continue, despite subverting official policy, will be discussed.

The English bishops' policy: Irish migration and the English Catholic church in context

In his Lenten address for 1955, Cardinal Griffin stated that the English Bishops had 'no wish to treat the Irish as a separate community'. All those working with the Irish in England should have the aim of ensuring 'that they are a credit to their native land and are fully integrated with the Catholic community of this country'.¹ From the English perspective, the phenomenon of Irish migration to mainland Britain was nothing new. It had been going on for over a century and a half and the English Catholic church as it now existed was largely made up of people who were either themselves Irish or the descendants of Irish immigrants. There was a well-established tradition of Irish priests, trained in Irish or British seminaries, serving part or all of their careers in British dioceses. Over this lengthy period, Irish people had successfully integrated into both Catholic and public life in Britain, while 'retaining...loyalty to...[the] customs and culture' of Ireland.² As far as the English church was concerned, there was nothing particular about the circumstances of migration in the mid-twentieth century to cause any change of approach. It seems that the English bishops, whilst they did not want openly to block the initiatives of the Irish hierarchy, did not understand why they were felt to be necessary and were keen to ensure that separate religious provision for Irish Catholics in England did not become the direction of future policy by default.

The history of Catholicism in England following the re-establishment of the hierarchy in 1850 supports the English bishops' argument regarding the long

¹ Excerpts from Cardinal Griffin's Lenten address, quoted in Memorandum on Irish Emigrants in England and Wales (undated), p.2. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 3, Irish Episcopal Commission, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

² Ibid., p.1.

continuum of Irish migration over that time. Antony Archer argues that prior to Catholic emancipation in 1829, Catholicism in England was largely rural and linked to the persistence of 'Old Catholics' who could trace descent back to the recusants of the Reformation period. Catholic gentry and landowners provided patronage and protection for their tenants and retainers. Younger sons who moved to towns formed a nucleus for a Catholic middle-class in places such as Newcastle.³ Catholic middle-class leadership was strengthened around the time of the re-establishment of the hierarchy by the conversion of well-educated individuals who had previously been part of the Anglican Oxford movement.⁴ At the same time, the advent of mass immigration from Ireland created a growing number of urban, working-class Catholics. As immigration proved to be sustained over a long time period, the cohort of newly arrived Irish working-class Catholics was continually replenished.⁵ James Hickey argues that these three groups, 'Old Catholics', recently converted middle class intellectuals and working class Irish had little in common and little time for each other.⁶ The remarks made by Mrs Barbara Charlton, a member of the Northumberland gentry, at a dinner-party in 1859 are frequently quoted as evidence of these divisions. Mrs Charlton firmly assured her fellow diners that she was 'an English Catholic not an Irish one which is all the difference in the world.' For her, that difference lay in the fact that 'English Catholics...are taught right from wrong, whereas Irish Catholics, belonging to a yet savage nation, know no better'. However, she was similarly critical of English converts, complaining

³ Antony Archer, *The Two Catholic Churches: A Study in Oppression* (London, 1986), pp.20, 21; James Hickey, *Urban Catholics: Urban Catholicism in England and Wales from 1829 to the Present Day* (London, 1967), pp.15-20.

⁴ Archer, *The Two Catholic Churches*, p.20.

⁵ Hickey, *Urban Catholicism*, p.22.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 30-31.

that ‘their peculiar antics and far-fetched ideas were making a caricature of the Catholic faith’.⁷ It is, perhaps, unfortunate that Mrs Charlton’s views on Irish Catholics and the strong dividing line between Irish and English Catholics have been so often quoted to substantiate the existence of such a divide. Sheridan Gilley, quoting her within his recent paper on English attitudes to Irish Catholics, makes the point that she also directed her scathing commentary at Cardinal Wiseman, the Anglican clergy, Jesuits, nuns, many members of her family and her own servants.⁸ The implication, based on her comments, that the division between Irish and English Catholics was somehow a given and immutable, should perhaps be discounted.

Archer also argues that the English Catholic church, after the re-establishment of the hierarchy, prioritised ministering to Irish Catholic immigrants over proselytising to the English working class.⁹ Furthermore, the new English hierarchy chose an ultramontane model for their church, which, whilst it seemed ‘strange and apparently alien’ to the English (including many of the ‘Old Catholics’), was in line with the preoccupations of Rome and similar in form to the Catholic church in Ireland. It therefore offered a haven of familiarity and stability to new immigrants in a strange environment. Given that the majority of Irish migration was to urban centres, the Catholic church in the nineteenth century was ‘a largely urban and predominantly (though not wholly) Irish phenomenon’. Estimates based on census data suggest that in England in

⁷ Denis Gwynn, ‘The Irish Immigration’, in George Beck (ed), *The English Catholics 1850-1959* (London, 1950), p. 270; Archer, *The Two Catholic Churches*, p.21; Jackson, *The Irish in Britain*, p.135; Enda Delaney, *The Irish in Post-War Britain* (Oxford, 2007), p.143; Sheridan Gilley, ‘English Catholic attitudes to Irish Catholics’, *Immigrants and Minorities*, 27, 2-3 (2009), pp.226-247. All quoting: L.E.O. Charlton (ed), *The Recollections of a Northumbrian Lady 1815-66: Being the Memoirs of Barbara Charlton (nee Tasburgh)* (London, 1949).

⁸ Gilley, ‘English Catholic attitudes’, p.237.

⁹ Archer, *The Two Catholic Churches*, pp.29-41.

1851, there were at least 800,000 Catholics out of a population of 18 million (4.5 per cent). Of those 800,000, 450,000 were probably Irish born.¹⁰ In 1887, Cardinal Manning estimated that eight-tenths of Catholics in England were Irish.¹¹ Leakage, the problem that so concerned McQuaid and the Irish Bishops, was not a new phenomenon. It was also a cause of concern throughout the nineteenth century and not only within the Catholic church, as religious bodies of all denominations struggled to connect with the urban working class.¹² Failure to continue religious duties other than baptism, marriage or for support in sickness and death, was a common feature in poor working-class (mainly Irish) Catholics in London in the later nineteenth century and was frequently reported to Charles Booth by Catholic priests interviewed for his poverty surveys. The London priests attempted to tackle this through vigorous pastoral work (including house to house visiting), a remedy similar to that favoured by McQuaid, but lack of sufficient man-power for the task was then, as later, a constant problem.¹³ 'The pastoral strategy of regular parish visiting' was also a feature in other Victorian cities, although Michael Hornsby-Smith considers that the extent of this has been exaggerated into a 'generalized myth'.¹⁴ By the end of the nineteenth century, Irish immigration had been a sustained feature for over a century, albeit with fluctuations in numbers over different time periods. Therefore, the descendants of immigrants were contributing substantially to the number of Catholics in England. By 1901, it was already being noted that whilst

¹⁰ Ibid., pp.29, 30.

¹¹ Jackson, *The Irish in Britain*, p.145.

¹² Ibid., p.145.

¹³ See discussion in Jackson, *The Irish in Britain*, pp.145-146.

¹⁴ For a description of assiduous, possibly coercive, visiting by Catholic priests amongst the poor Irish of mid-Victorian Newcastle, see Archer, *The Two Churches*, pp.52-53. Archer questions whether the Irish welcomed this style of priesthood. Michael Hornsby-Smith, *Catholics in England 1950-2000* (London,1999), p.7.

‘priests...feel sure of the first and second’ generation, they had ‘little hold’ on the third.¹⁵ Even this seems somewhat optimistic given the concerns raised by other commentators regarding the leakage of immigrants themselves.

The English Catholic church continued to have much in common with the Irish church into the twentieth century, sharing particularly an emphasis on leadership by priests and a preference for a passive, docile laity, frequently described by Cardinal Heenan as ‘the simple faithful’.¹⁶ As late as 1972, Heenan was identifying ‘modernism’ as the ‘chief heresy...and chief threat’ and arguing that the way to strengthen the church was through house-to-house visitation and not through surveys, meetings or strategies.¹⁷ In the period immediately after World War Two, when Irish immigration was running at high levels, English Catholicism was characterised as a ‘fortress church’ with a distinctive sub-culture that separated it from non-Catholics. The boundaries of this ‘fortress’ were secured by ‘extreme’ and ‘uncompromising’ sanctions against marriage outside the church, which had the support of most practising Catholics.¹⁸ Socialisation within this sub-culture was achieved through a complex network of Catholic organisations that provided the framework for a segregated life. Children were inducted from birth into the structures of parish life. They attended Catholic schools where they were taught by Catholic teachers trained in Catholic colleges. Religious practice was enriched by retreats and other activities given by religious orders and the parish was the focus for a wide range of Catholic organisations catering for social and spiritual

¹⁵ Jackson, *The Irish in Britain*, p.141.

¹⁶ Hornsby-Smith, *Catholics in England 1950-2000*, p.7.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.7.

¹⁸ Michael Hornsby-Smith, *Roman Catholics in England: Studies in Social Structure Since the Second World War* (Cambridge, 1987), p.21; Hornsby-Smith, *Catholics in England 1950-2000*, p.12.

needs, through which community networks could be established and marriage partners found. Work was the main aspect of life in the secular sphere and where Catholics could be exposed to outside influences (hence the particular fear of the Irish hierarchy that Catholics with poor grounding in apologetics could be vulnerable to the proselytising of communists). Hornsby-Smith argues that the pervasive network of Catholic institutions in most other aspects of life was sufficient to reinforce a 'collective-expressive' involvement in which religious identity was based on full participation in the collective associational life of the church, usually at parish level. Philip Hammond, the sociologist who developed this categorisation, contrasts the 'collective-expressive' with the 'individual-expressive' in which religion is seen as a consumer good with individuals choosing from the 'religious market' their preferred elements of belief and participation. 'Collective-expressive' identity, in which group membership and activity is foregrounded, is argued to be 'involuntary and immutable' whereas 'individual-expressive' is 'transient, changeable and voluntary'.¹⁹ However, the high rate of leakage from the church would suggest that Catholic religious identity, at least as expressed by behaviour rather than merely as a statement of faith, was not as immutable as the hierarchies might have wished.

Catholic culture in England therefore had many similarities with that in Ireland and should not have caused too much 'culture shock' for Irish immigrants. A majority of Catholics in England were of Irish ancestry; an appreciable number were themselves first generation migrants.²⁰ Archer describes a Newcastle parish in the 1930s, with an associational life based on

¹⁹ Hornsby-Smith, *Catholics in England, 1950-2000*, p.13; Manuel A Vasquez and Marie F Marquardt, *Globalizing the Sacred* (Newark, 2003), pp.25, 26.

²⁰ Hornsby-Smith, *Roman Catholics in England*, pp.24, 118-119.

Guilds (for both men and women), the Legion of Mary (for women only – the men had ‘balked at a similar proposal for them’), a branch of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul for the relief of poverty and a regular schedule of dances, slide shows, whist drives and pies-and-peas suppers. The parishioners were ‘chiefly Irish or of Irish descent’.²¹ Many of these activities would have been familiar elements in Irish parish life. The main difference was that the English church placed much less stress on certain devotional forms that were prominent in lay religious practice in Ireland. These included adherence to personal devotions such as the Sacred Heart, Immaculate Conception or Miraculous Medal.²²

Despite this, Archer’s account indicates that newly arrived immigrants were able to integrate into parish life alongside their English counterparts, many of whom were of Irish descent. Indeed, even the evidence available to the Irish hierarchy indicated that around 50 per cent of new immigrants continued to practise their faith. Given this evidence, the robustness of the Irish hierarchy’s conclusion that the ‘Irishman’s inferiority complex’ was the main barrier to continued religious adherence should have been questioned even then. The evidence also provides a foundation for the English hierarchy’s approach based on a ‘one community’ argument. However, there were those working within the English church who took the view that specific initiatives targeted at the Irish were required. The rest of the chapter will focus on two of these, both of which were based on a specific service for the Irish – a building from which specified services would be offered to migrants, rather than the established pattern of contact through house to house visitation.

²¹ Archer, *The Two Churches*, pp.93-94.

²² Fuller, *Irish Catholicism*, p.20.

The London Irish Centre

The proposal for a London Irish Centre was first put forward in March 1948 by a small group of Irish priests working in the dioceses of Westminster, Southwark and Brentford.²³ These priests held substantive posts within the London dioceses and served existing parishes. They had not been given any specific remit to work with the Irish. Their identification of particular needs amongst Irish immigrants, therefore, came from them, rather than from higher in the hierarchy. From the start they envisaged separate provision for the Irish. The Irish priests put together a 'proposed plan of campaign for the Irish in London' based on their assessment of immigrant needs and what services they felt were required to respond to them. They estimated that there were around 100,000 Irish in London but they offered no source for this figure or any breakdown by age, gender or by how many of these were new arrivals and how many were already settled. They thought that most were working-class but noted that there were 'many professional people...doctors, nurses, teachers'. They believed that most were unmarried, 'living in poor digs or hostels...[with] a complete lack of Catholic or homely atmosphere'. The Irish were not willing to join existing parish guilds or Catholic Action work and were 'shy to join in the ordinary parish group' where they were not made to feel particularly welcome. Their participation in cultural activities was 'virtually nil' with the Gaelic League being 'not too popular [and] in the hands of the wrong people'. Those leading the Gaelic Athletic Association were 'doing good work [but] those in charge...have no great ability'. On the other hand, 17 commercial dancehalls were attracting 600 to 1,000 dancers on three nights per week. 'Undesirable

²³ Letter from Michael Carey, Chairman and Ambrose Woods, Secretary, of the Working Committee to Cardinal Griffin, Archbishop of Westminster, 13 March 1948. Griffin Papers, Irish Centre, 1948-1956, Gr.2/127, WDA.

types [were] often admitted' although the priests did not note whether these themselves were Irish – although as these dancehalls catered for an Irish clientele, they probably were. Certainly, the priests believed that the 'better type Irish' would avoid them. From this assessment, the priests concluded that there was 'no club nor centre of any description for Irish Catholic Workers in the whole of London. No library, reading room or Irish Canteen'. Worse than the absence of Catholic facilities was the fact that the only club or social work facility for Irish 'exiles' were the Connolly Clubs (run by the Connolly Association) which were communist. Therefore, if the church did not do something, the immigrants would be at the mercy of the communists, who 'recognise the special needs of the Irish exile, and seek to exploit them.' The priests' committee argued that timing for an Irish Centre was opportune because 'the Labour Government are scared of Communism' and there was interest in Irish migrant needs among the bishops of both the English and Irish Hierarchies and the Irish Government.²⁴

Not everyone shared the priests' enthusiasm. Having been made aware of the memorandum and that it was being sent for consideration to Westminster, the Archbishop of Southwark wrote to Cardinal Griffin to block any support. He requested that the hierarchy should act together for, whilst he was 'very fond of the Irish...[he] did not see the need of the plan proposed [or for] special services for the Irish.'²⁵ Griffin took a view designed to mediate between the two sides. He supported the establishment of a 'Bureau somewhere in London' where priests in Ireland could send details of new migrants and where 'Irish boys and

²⁴ Memorandum: Proposed Plan of Campaign for the Irish in London, March 1948. Griffin Papers, Irish Centre 1948-1956, Gr.2/127, WDA.

²⁵ Letter from Archbishop of Southwark to Archbishop of Westminster, 15 March 1948. Griffin Papers, Irish Centre 1948-1956, Gr.2/127, WDA.

girls could call on their arrival'. Griffin offered no suggestions for how this might work in practice but thought it 'would be a splendid way of keeping in touch with them'. He was also careful to state clearly that there should be no separation between the English and Irish but that they should all work together within one church as 'has always been done in the past'. He referred the matter to the hierarchy's Low Week Meeting.²⁶

The priests' committee was keen to generate further momentum for the proposal and convened a 'general meeting of Irish priests in London'. The meeting was attended by '50 to 60 priests, old and young, who were most enthusiastic about the scheme'. It concluded with a unanimous resolution requesting the Bishop to approve the scheme and appoint priests to it as soon as possible.²⁷ The proposal was discussed at the Low Week Meeting and the bishops supported the opening of a 'bureau' in Westminster Diocese 'to contact Immigrants'.²⁸ This recommendation was extremely vague and the bishops did not seem to appreciate, or debate, the wider aspects of the priests' committee proposals that went far beyond a simple 'information exchange'. Reporting the decision to Ambrose Woods, the committee secretary, Griffin stressed the need for the priests' committee to work with the 'many societies' in London who were already working with the Irish, particularly the Legion of Mary. He also considered that 'suitable premises' could be obtained through existing organisations such as the Young Christian Workers or the Grail.²⁹ It is not clear

²⁶ Letter from Griffin to Southwark, 16 March 1948. Griffin Papers, Irish Centre 1948-1956, Gr.2/127, WDA.

²⁷ Letter from Ambrose Woods, Secretary of the Working Committee, to Cardinal Griffin, 2 April 1948. Griffin Papers, Irish Centre 1948-1956, Gr.2/127, WDA.

²⁸ Note of the Low Week Meeting 1948, Agenda Item 22: Irish Bureau to contact Immigrants. Griffin Papers, Irish Centre 1948-1956., Gr.2/127, WDA.

²⁹ The Grail Community was a Catholic secular institute for celibate, lay, Catholic women. It was founded in the Netherlands in 1921 as a movement for young Catholic women who did not wish to join a religious order but wanted to devote their life to social work and community

from this letter whether he believed that these bodies might be able to offer some office space to be used for passing migrant details to London parishes but it is certainly unlikely that they would have been able to provide exclusive use of the extensive club, office and hostel facilities which the priests' committee had in mind.³⁰ The understandings of the hierarchy and the priests' committee may have been at cross-purposes from the outset. There is further evidence for this in that Griffin subsequently wrote to the Irish Bishops setting out the scheme as one for exchanging migrant name and address details and expressing the hope that the Hierarchies would co-operate on this. Various Irish bishops responded positively, some also sending small donations.³¹

Keen to maintain momentum, in 1950 the Irish priests' committee sent a delegation to seek support and funding from the Irish government. Although apparently well received and given to understand that there would be financial support available, none was, in fact, forthcoming.³² The committee therefore tried to reinvigorate support for the scheme amongst the London bishops. They revised the memorandum initially submitted to Griffin in 1948. Much of the revised version was taken verbatim from the original, although they now stressed that the majority of the Irish in London were working class and took care to point out that the 'undesirable types' to be found in the Irish dancehalls

living. It came to England in the 1935. See: 'The Grail Movement (1): Work for Young Women', *Catholic Herald*, 16th March 1935 [consulted at: <http://archive.catholicherald.co.uk/article/16th-march-1935/7/the-grail-movement-i-work-for-young-women> (30 August 2012)]; and Peter Stanford, 'Grail Community: life inside a (gently crumbling retreat)', *The Independent*, 10th October 2010 [consulted at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/grail-community-life-inside-a-gently-crumbling-retreat-2099614.html> (30 August 2012)].

³⁰ Letter from Griffin to Ambrose Woods, 21 April 1948. Griffin Papers, Irish Centre 1948-1956, Gr.2/127, WDA.

³¹ Letters from Bishops of Tuam and Cashel and Archbishops of Armagh and Dublin to Griffin, 12th, 14, 22 and 28 June 1948. Griffin Papers, Irish Centre 1948-56, Gr.2/127, WDA.

³² Letter from Griffin to John Costello, Taoiseach, 9 May 1950; Letter from Costello to Griffin, 18 May 1950. Griffin Papers, Irish Centre 1948-1956, Gr.2/127, WDA.

were definitely ‘non-Irish’. Again, they stressed their belief in the need for central club and cultural facilities for the Irish but were now also proposing hostel facilities.³³ The argument for this was based on a letter sent to Griffin by a London probation officer who had been struck by the ‘number of Irish names’ appearing in the Criminal Courts. Although he offered no evidence that these were, in fact, new immigrants, he clearly considered that they were and that their offending behaviour had largely been caused by their coming under the influence of ‘the dregs of metropolitan society’ during stays in Salvation Army hostels or similar establishments. He considered that Catholic hostel accommodation for new arrivals during their first months in London could remove these young men from their ‘mentors of mendacity’ and prevent both a ‘rapid descent into...crime and loss of the Faith’.³⁴ The priests’ committee were therefore running a new argument which stressed the need to provide a wide range of facilities for Irish migrants as ‘preventive work’ to avoid future problems. This implicitly shifted the emphasis to work with very new arrivals, although the proposals did not include any plans for ensuring that support was short term – with a transition plan to move people on to permanent accommodation and participation in local parishes rather than continued usage of or dependency on the ‘Centre’ facilities. The plans for the ‘Centre’ were becoming more extensive. The committee now proposed that it should include: an advice bureau staffed by a paid social worker assisted by volunteers who, amongst other duties would maintain registers of ‘good and bad digs and good and bad jobs’; temporary hostel accommodation; a large hall for ‘nightly social

³³ Irish Priests’ Committee, London, Memorandum on the Situation of Irish Workers in London and Scheme Proposed by Irish Priests’ Committee, undated (1950, based on position in file). Griffin Papers, Irish Centre 1948-1956, Gr.2/127, WDA.

³⁴ Letter from J.F.McL. Anderson to Griffin, 1 April 1950. Griffin Papers, Irish Centre 1948-1956, Gr.2/127, WDA.

and recreational functions'; meeting rooms for 'Irish Cultural, Social Welfare and Recreational Societies'; a canteen and lounge for no better reason than these were 'an established type of institution in England and no work of this nature would be complete without one'; a library, reading room and writing room because 'many have nowhere to sit in the evening and no facilities even for writing home'; and a chapel. One or two Irish priests with experience of working in England should be appointed to run the centre and paid staff would also be required, including a lay manager or warden, a housekeeper/linen-maid and a receptionist/bookkeeper. A team of volunteers to work on social welfare and recreational activities would also be required. The committee gave no clear costings for either the capital or revenue required to support such a scheme but they believed that if some initial funding were forthcoming, the project would become self-supporting. They estimated the costs of renting and refurbishing a suitable property to be in the order of £10,000 to £12,000.³⁵

Queries continued to be raised as to the need for or viability of such a scheme. Bishop Beck of Brentwood suggested that a 'careful and objective survey by representatives of the English and Irish Hierarchies' would be useful to inform any proposals. Monsignor Worlock, secretary to Cardinal Griffin, responded by reminding him of the history of the Irish Centre proposal to date and suggesting that no action should be taken in advance of a clear response from the Irish government, a position which Beck supported.³⁶ This suggests that while those at senior levels in the London Catholic hierarchy were not

³⁵ Irish Priests' Committee, Memorandum on the Situation of Irish Workers in London and Scheme Proposed by Irish Priests' Committee, undated (1950, based on position in file). Griffin Papers, Irish Centre 1948-1956, Gr.2/127, WDA.

³⁶ Letter from Bishop Beck of Brentwood to Monsignor Worlock, 10 January 1951; response from Monsignor Worlock, 13 January 1951. Griffin Papers, Irish Centre 1948-1956, Gr.2/127, WDA.

prepared explicitly to block the scheme, they expected that without support from the Irish government it would wither anyway. An anonymous briefing prepared for the Bishops' Meeting in March 1954 noted that the scheme had already been in gestation for over six years. Meanwhile, a hostel had been opened in Tollington Park, was working well and was self-financing. The author concluded that hostels were 'the best solution to the Irish problem'. The briefing went on to suggest that proposals for a 'social centre' should not be supported, since funding a 'glorified dance-hall' could not be a priority given the need to finance Catholic schools. The author stressed that he was not 'in any way anti-Irish but am above all recommending a practical scheme'.³⁷ It is clear from this memorandum that the London bishops were not prepared to underwrite the Centre financially.

Despite these voices of, at least partial, dissent, the priests' committee went ahead with a fund raising scheme based on the extended model. This had the blessing of Griffin once it was agreed that fund raising should be limited to the Irish in London and certainly not extended to Ireland, since it was 'felt that the Irish lads and girls who obtain employment over here are far better off than those' who stayed at home, 'the idea that money should come from Ireland to provide them with amenities in London causes resentment'.³⁸ The appeal was successful with donations forthcoming from individual Irish bishops and from a number of British national Banks.³⁹ Further donations and loans came from a

³⁷ 'Points for discussion with Bishops at meeting 16 March 1954', anonymous. Griffin Papers, Irish Centre 1948-1956, Gr.2/127, WDA.

³⁸ Fund raising leaflet for 'Irish Centre London'; letter describing arrangements for appeal launch 20th January 1955, Father Woods to Griffin, 29th December 1954. Griffin Papers, Irish Centre 1948-1956, Gr.2/127, WDA.

³⁹ Letters from Westminster Bank, 8 March 1955; National Provincial Bank, 9 March 1955; Midland Bank, 11 March 1955; and Barclays Bank, 14 March 1955. Griffin Papers, Irish Centre 1948-1956, Gr.2/127, WDA.

variety of individuals and organisations, including Arthur Guinness and Co. Lord Pakenham, chairman of the National Bank, agreed to grant overdraft facilities of £15,000.⁴⁰ The willingness of these organisations to provide donations or loans is surprising given the absence of anything resembling a costed business plan. By June 1955, suitable premises in Camden Square had been found and a survey undertaken.⁴¹ With fundraising underway and serious financial commitments in the form of loans, rent and refurbishment costs envisaged, Monsignor Worlock became concerned regarding the governance of the project. At this point, a small executive committee to oversee the work had been established, presumably as a development of the Irish priests' committee although no details are available in the Westminster Archive. This committee was chaired by Ambrose Woods (previously secretary to the priests' committee), with two further Irish priests, Thomas McNamara and Bernard Manning, as honorary treasurers. J.P. Steacy, a lay member, was honorary secretary. The remainder of the committee was comprised of an honorary legal advisor and two further lay members.⁴² There were no female members, religious or lay. During the first half of 1955, Worlock began to receive complaints from priests not on the executive committee and from Mr Steacy, the Honorary Secretary, concerning the behaviour of the priests on the executive, who were accused of being 'dilatory and secretive'.⁴³ Father Ned Carey reported that the project was run as a secret society with refusal to communicate

⁴⁰ Letter from J.P. Steacy, Hon. Secretary, Executive Committee of the Irish Centre, London to Griffin, 20 July 1955. Griffin Papers, Irish Centre 1948-1956, Gr.2/127, WDA.

⁴¹ Survey Report on 52 Camden Square, Stanley Hicks and Son, 28 June 1955. Griffin Papers, Irish Centre 1948-1956, Gr.2/127, WDA.

⁴² Executive Committee listed on reverse of fund raising leaflet, January 1955. Griffin Papers, Irish Centre 1948-1956, Gr.2/127, WDA.

⁴³ Memorandum on Irish Centre, Monsignor Worlock, 6 September 1955. Griffin Papers, Irish Centre 1948-56, Gr.2/127, WDA.

information about progress to, or accept help from, those outside the executive.⁴⁴

The need for a constitution was strengthened when Arthur Guinness and Co. made their donation conditional on the appointment of the bishops of the three dioceses (Westminster, Southwark and Brentwood) as Patrons with Lord Pakenham to be appointed as lay President. The priests on the committee were resentful of any attempt to take control of what they perceived as their project. Their counter complaint was that they were being attacked by ‘anti-clericals’. Worlock expressed surprise when the anti-clerical faction turned out to be Father Ned Carey and a Mr Fehan of the Anti-Partition League.⁴⁵ After a number of ‘delicate’ meetings, a constitution was agreed with an expanded committee of twelve members including representatives of relevant organisations (the Anti-Partition League and The Irish Club, for example). Father McNamara was appointed as Chaplain to the Centre and Cardinal d’Alton, Archbishop of Armagh, presided at the official opening on 27th September 1955.⁴⁶

By November 1955 a full complement of staff had been appointed and hostel facilities were open, offering accommodation for men at a weekly rate of £2.15.0.⁴⁷ This was not particularly cheap – basic cubicle accommodation could

⁴⁴ Letter from Father Ned Carey to Monsignor Worlock, 26 August 1955. Griffin Papers, Irish Centre 1948-56, Gr.2/127, WDA.

⁴⁵ The Anti-partition League was founded in 1945 by nationalists in Northern Ireland to campaign for unification. Branches were rapidly established in England and Wales which, from 1946, were co-ordinated through a national council. See: ‘Anti-partition congress meets in Birmingham’, *Catholic Herald*, 15 November 1946, p.7 [consulted at: <http://archive.catholicherald.co.uk/article/15th-november-1946/7/anti-partition-congress-meets-in-birmingham> (18 October 2012)].

⁴⁶ Memorandum on Irish Centre, Monsignor Worlock, 6 September 1955. Griffin Papers, Irish Centre 1948-56, Gr.2/127, WDA.

⁴⁷ London Irish Centre, Report of House Committee Meeting, 10 November 1955. Griffin Papers, Irish Centre 1948-56, Gr.2/127, WDA. A hostel for Irish girls had been opened in Highgate, North London in December 1954. The oversight of this also came within the remit of the Irish Centre Executive Committee (see annual reports Godfrey Papers, Irish Centre 1961-2, Go.2/127, WDA).

be had at a Rowton House working-mens' hostel for £1.4.6 per week.⁴⁸ It is not clear whether the cost may have been a barrier to the most vulnerable migrants accessing the Centre. The challenges of running what had evolved into a complex project became apparent through the problems arising in the early years. These included difficulties with the sitting tenants who occupied the building when purchased and who raised numerous complaints about the behaviour of the 'transients' being accommodated in the centre.⁴⁹ Managing the staff of the centre also proved problematic on a number of occasions and appears to reflect lack of experience, and clear governance arrangements, on the part of the centre chaplain (responsible for the day to day management) and the executive committee. For example, during the appointment of a steward for the centre during 1956, critical but confidential references were passed by a member of the executive committee to the applicant, leading to complaints from the referee.⁵⁰ Problems with staff management persisted and were not always easy to resolve, again perhaps because they were beyond the experience of the chaplain. In 1961, the executive committee discussed the ongoing problems with the centre manager, which included lack of supervision of kitchen staff, lax handling of money and 'rarely putting in an appearance before 11-11.30 in the morning'. However, despite the clear implication that the manager was misappropriating Centre funds, no plan for tackling the problems was recorded.⁵¹

⁴⁸ <www.workhouses.org.uk/Rowton/> (30 August 2012).

⁴⁹ Letter from A.S. Cole to Cardinal Griffin, 6 November 1955. Griffin Papers, Irish Centre 1948-56, Gr.2/127, WDA.

⁵⁰ Correspondence between Bishop of Bray and Monsignor Worlock, 19 and 30 May 1956. Griffin Papers, Irish Centre 1948-56, Gr.2/127, WDA.

⁵¹ London Irish Centre – Executive Committee Minutes, 4 May 1961. Godfrey Papers, Irish Centre 1961-62, Go.2/127, WDA.

Finances were a persistent problem for the centre, dating back to the decision to purchase premises rather than rent. The documentation in the Westminster Diocesan Archives generally relates to difficulties encountered by the Centre, as these required the intervention of the Archbishop or his staff. The successes are not recorded in the Archives, potentially leading to a biased view. However, it is clear that there were problems with financial and staff management and that the relationship between the executive committee and the chaplain was not always harmonious or productive. The executive committee and Monsignor Worlock were concerned about the running of the centre and its finances whereas the chaplain believed that the committee ‘does not seem prepared to face up to their responsibilities.’ Indeed, the chaplain had the, perhaps unreasonable, understanding that the sole purpose of ‘inviting lay people on the executive was that they would be responsible for raising the necessary finance’.⁵² On occasion these difficulties clearly caused embarrassment to the Diocese, as when Monsignor Worlock was contacted by a firm of Consulting Ecclesiologists complaining that the executive committee was refusing to accept their invoice for redesigning the chapel interior.⁵³

By September 1961, Monsignor Worlock was sufficiently concerned to suggest to the executive committee chair that help from the Columban Fathers (who already oversaw the Legion of Mary extension work, the Camp Chaplaincy and the Hotel and Catering Workers Chaplaincy) might be appropriate.⁵⁴ The executive committee avoided this outcome by producing

⁵² Letter from Father McNamara to Monsignor Worlock, 2 September 1961. Godfrey Papers, Irish Centre 1961-62, Go.2/127, WDA.

⁵³ Letter from Bartlett and Purnell, Consulting Ecclesiologists to Monsignor Worlock, 16 June 1961. Godfrey Papers, Irish Centre 1961-62, Go.2/127, WDA.

⁵⁴ Letter from Monsignor Worlock to Mr Steacy, Lay Chairman of the Irish Centre Executive Committee, 27 September 1961. Godfrey Papers, Irish Centre 1961-62, Go.2/127, WDA.

plans to increase income at the centre through the establishment of club facilities (bar, dining room, social events, etc) for a paying membership. The facility was named the 'Carey Club' in recognition of the late Father Michael Carey who had chaired the original 'working committee' when the centre was first proposed in 1948. At the same time, also at Monsignor Worlock's instigation, the Centre's constitution was amended to bring in representation from a wider range of Irish organisations, with the intention of encouraging 'a greater measure of help from the Irish community in London.' The objectives continued to prioritise the provision of 'hostels with chapels, canteens, libraries, living rooms and residential accommodation in a Christian atmosphere' as the main purpose of the Centre.⁵⁵ The hostels included not only those for men included in the Centre premises in Camden and at Tollington Park but also the hostel for girls, in Highgate, North London, which came under the oversight of the Centre.⁵⁶ The hostels provided all activities of daily living, including religious provision and associated social groups, within the premises. This seems to be in direct contradiction to the overall policy aim of the English Hierarchy to integrate Irish immigrants within existing local parishes. The constitution, perhaps surprisingly given that Worlock was instrumental in getting it redrafted, continued to have unmeasurable (and, in reality, undeliverable) aims including: 'providing in any way for the spiritual moral and welfare of [Irish] workers'; and 'relieving poverty sickness and distress' (punctuation as in the original document).⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Letter from Monsignor Worlock to Father McNamara, 22 November 1961; Document headed 'Carey Club Rules', undated. Godfrey Papers, Irish Centre 1961-62, Go.2/127, WDA.

⁵⁶ Typescript Report on the Irish Girls Hostel, Hornsey Lane, Highgate, London N6, for 1960. Godfrey Papers, Irish Centre 1961-62, Go.2/127, WDA.

⁵⁷ Amendments of the Constitution of the Council of the Irish Centre (undated – likely to be 1961 from position in file). Godfrey Papers, Irish Centre 1961-62, Go.2/127, WDA.

The annual reports confirm that the Centre tended to encourage continued separation of the Irish through its activities, rather than facilitating integration. Two praesidia of the Legion of Mary were set up, with membership based on previous residence at either the mens' or girls' hostel.⁵⁸ The Carey Club facilities were well used and the Centre actively marketed its facilities to the various County Associations, becoming the headquarters of the Council of County Associations.⁵⁹ The hostel accommodation attracted steady numbers of residents: around 700 to 800 men and around 1,000 women and girls per year during the early 1960s.⁶⁰ Reports for the girls' hostel note that a large influx occurred in the summer months as Irish teachers and university students came to London for temporary employment or voluntary work with the Legion of Mary.⁶¹ Whilst these no doubt appreciated the availability of accommodation during their summer vacation activities, this was not in keeping with the original aim of providing accommodation for vulnerable young people who might otherwise have been at risk of physical, mental, social or moral welfare difficulties. However, some at least of the latter group, particularly girls under the age of 18, were accommodated. Help with obtaining employment was also offered to both men and women and a small number, who were considered 'unemployable', were given their fares home.⁶² The reports also suggest that the development aims of the Centre Council sometimes ran ahead of their ability to achieve financial balance. For example, the Council report for 1962 notes the

⁵⁸ Report on work for Irish Emigrants for year 1961, February 1962 (typescript). Godfrey Papers, Irish Centre 1961-62, Go.2/127, WDA.

⁵⁹ The Council for the Irish Centre, Seventh Annual Report for the Year Ended 31st December 1962 (typescript). Godfrey Papers, Irish Centre 1961-62, Go.2/127, WDA.

⁶⁰ The Council for the Irish Centre, annual reports 1961 and 1962 (typescript). Godfrey Papers, Irish Centre 1961-2, Go.2/127, WDA.

⁶¹ The Council for the Irish Centre, annual report 1962 (typescript). Godfrey Papers, Irish Centre 1961-2, Go.2/127, WDA.

⁶² The Council for the Irish Centre, annual reports, 1961 and 1962. Godfrey Papers, Irish Centre 1961-2, Go.2/127, WDA.

launch of a campaign to raise funds for the employment of a full time welfare officer to be based at the Centre. This was a collaboration with ‘various Irish Organisations’ but came at a time when the Centre Administrative Committee were reporting an annual expenditure of £7,220 against an income of £3,960.⁶³

The history of the establishment and early years of the London Irish Centre gives an indication of how diffuse power was in the English Hierarchy and, in this case, the Archdiocese of Westminster. There were no clear processes through which proposals could be evaluated against extant policy or robust assessment of need and likely outcome and no clear structures for governance and accountability. The proposal for and development of the Centre was driven by a small group of highly motivated priests who regarded the Centre as their own project and did not welcome wider input. The assessment these priests made of the needs of young Irish immigrants and how to respond to them may not have been widely shared and were, indeed, critiqued by Hubert Daly during his visit to London on behalf of McQuaid and Frank Duff (as discussed in chapter 1). Some very senior clergy within the London dioceses also questioned both the need for and viability of the project. Despite this, the initial rather vague proposals from the ‘priests committee’ were given equally vague support by the London bishops. The Archdiocese took a hands off approach to the Centre despite the fact that it could be said to be directly cutting across their stated policy objective of integrating the Irish within local parishes. The Archdiocese only became involved when alerted to concerns relating to the finances or management of the Centre or when tensions between the different interest groups involved became apparent.

⁶³ The Council for the Irish Centre, annual report for year ended 31 December 1962; Irish Centre Administrative Committee ‘Memorandum re finance in respect of the year ending 31st December 1962’. Godfrey Papers, Irish Centre 1961-2, Go.2/127, WDA.

The London Centre was a response by priests working in London to the needs of Irish people as they saw and interpreted them. This was strongly influenced by a perceived need to remove young people from unchristian influences, notably commercial dancehalls, into a Christian (Catholic) environment. This went far beyond the initial 'bureau' proposal, which had the support of Cardinal Griffin and was understood by senior members of both the Irish and English hierarchies to be a means of passing on details of new Irish arrivals to English parishes. The idea of 'centres' to support the Irish had resonance elsewhere in England and it is therefore worth contrasting the development of the London Irish Centre with that in Birmingham to examine similarities and differences in the ways in which Irish needs were understood and the different models of 'centres' to respond to them.

The Birmingham Irish Centre

As will be discussed in detail in chapter 6, the Birmingham Archdiocese had responded to the needs of female Irish workers in Birmingham during the Second World War through the provision of a club for Irish girls in conjunction with the Ministry of Labour and a joint venture with the city council to repatriate Irish single mothers and their babies. Both these initiatives were planned and led by Helen Murtagh, who was both a city councillor and a Diocesan lay welfare worker. After 1946, both these initiatives fall from view in the Diocesan archives and the club facility closed in 1946. However, Irish migration into the city continued and appeared again as an issue in 1951 in the

form of a report on Irish workers in Birmingham.⁶⁴ This was the work of Maurice Foley, a fieldworker with the Young Christian Workers (YCW, a Catholic Action group for young people, founded in Belgium by Cardinal Joseph Cardijn in 1930).⁶⁵ Foley spent a year ‘living and working amongst Irish fellows and girls’ in order to answer the question ‘why 50,000 Irish in Birmingham are not 50,000 apostles for the Faith?’. He argued that in a Catholic country (such as Ireland) ‘Catholicity...tends to be...acceptance of church doctrine and the personal living of it, rather than the missionary spirit and the desire to share it with others.’ He argued that the Irish in Birmingham were at risk of social and moral problems and that the main source of these arose from poor accommodation.⁶⁶ The problems of housing shortage in Birmingham resulted from a combination of wartime destruction of housing stock coupled with growth in population. This was not a specifically Irish problem, although as incomers they were certainly disproportionately affected by it. However, the behaviours Foley observed compounded the problem in that ‘the idea of keeping together seems to be characteristic of [the young Irish workers], often boys and girls sacrifice comfort in good digs in order to live together in a group.’ Sometimes these groups led to as many as 50 young people living together, often in ‘bad digs’ and leading to ‘the downfall of some...due to...mixing with the wrong crowd.’ Foley identified a range of social problems in the Irish, not all of which could be ascribed to poor accommodation. These included high numbers of Irish arriving in the city with no job or

⁶⁴ Maurice Foley, ‘Some notes on the situation of Irish workers in Birmingham’, typescript report, July 1951. Irish Centre Birmingham 1952-63, AP/J6, Birmingham Archdiocesan Archive (hereafter BAA).

⁶⁵ ‘A Boy from Flanders – Cardinal Joseph Cardijn – Founder of the YCW’, <www.ycwimpact.com> (2 December 2011).

⁶⁶ Foley, ‘Some notes on Irish workers in Birmingham’.

accommodation arranged; illegitimate pregnancy (75 per cent of which Foley estimated, without giving reasons, to be by Irish fathers); men who had gone to work in Birmingham ‘in good faith’ having left wives at home but who then established relationships with other women; and Irish girls living with, and having babies by, coloured men. As noted before, much of this behaviour was ascribed to lack of suitable leisure facilities. Again, commercial dancehalls were particularly identified as a problem but so too was the ‘passivity of the Irish’ who did not involve themselves in any of the more suitable activities on offer, for example ‘athletic associations’ or ‘Irish games’. Foley’s solution to this was, on the one hand, for the Irish authorities to ensure that young people were better prepared for life in England before they came and, on the other, to involve those in England in Catholic lay voluntary work. He described the work of the four sections of the YCW already working in Birmingham. They had English, Irish and African membership and three had Irish leaders. The section leaders had training in how ‘to reChristianise their own lives, their environment and the mass of their fellow workers’. The sections undertook voluntary welfare work, including ‘going door to door to identify available accommodation’ and ‘walk[ing] the streets at night’ looking for ‘those with no place to sleep’ and finding them lodgings. Foley stressed that this approach brought the Irish ‘in union with their English co-religionists’. With this background, the young Irish would be ‘a positive answer to the menace of atheistic Communism...[and start] new Christian families...[which would be] an enrichment to parish life and the life of the community as a whole.’⁶⁷ From the records available in the Archdiocesan archive, Foley’s report did not lead directly to any action in

⁶⁷ Foley, ‘Some notes on Irish workers in Birmingham’.

Birmingham. However, a copy was passed to the Taoiseach, Eamon de Valera, who gave an account of the accommodation in a speech in Galway in August 1951 with the intention of warning intending migrants of the difficulties they would face and pressuring the British Ministry of Labour and Birmingham employers to improve matters.⁶⁸ De Valera's interpretation of the situation ignored Foley's assessment that the overcrowding experienced by some young Irish people was often the result of their own choice rather than an unavoidable necessity.

At around the same time, Reverend E.J. McCarthy, of the St. Columban's Foreign Mission Society in Los Angeles, was attempting to encourage liaison between the Archbishop of Birmingham and the Irish Hierarchy. McCarthy was an Irish-born Columban Father who had been working for the order in the United States since 1919. It is not clear how he came to be in Birmingham or why he should have been making recommendations for work with migrants. McCarthy's interest in Irish migrant welfare may be linked to McQuaid's subsequent decision to give oversight of the Legion of Mary development work and the chaplaincies to the Columbans. McCarthy's initial thoughts were that the Legion of Mary in Birmingham should liaise more with the CSWB in Dublin to exchange details of new migrants. He also informed the Birmingham Archdiocese of the plans for the London Irish Centre, an account of which he had received from Bishop Beck of Brentwood.⁶⁹ McCarthy then sought the views of Bishop Galvin, founder of the Missionary Society of St. Columban, who was then serving in China. Galvin did not support the CSWB model,

⁶⁸ Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, pp.193-194.

⁶⁹ Letter from Rev E. J. McCarthy, St. Columban's Foreign Mission Society, Los Angeles, California to Archbishop Masterson, 17 February 1952. Irish Centre, Birmingham 1952-63, AP/J6, BAA.

noting that ‘the failure of the bureau in Dublin under the direction of Frank Duff indicates a weak link...in your plan’ which was likely to be compounded by ‘incompatibility of temperament and certain antipathies’ although he did not elaborate on these. Galvin’s preferred model was to set up Columban mission centres in English dioceses to be staffed by priests and sisters. This, he argued, would be ‘a natural method’ of working with immigrants, in contrast to the ‘bureau’ model which he considered ‘a bit mechanical’. Building on this, McCarthy argued that early involvement with ‘the church in their new environment’ was the key. He was aware that some Irish ‘mission priests’ were already working in English parishes but he believed that a system for working out of ‘self-contained centres’ should be set up ‘to make contact with immigrants and administer spiritual first aid...and then turn them over to their respective pastors.’⁷⁰ No response to McCarthy’s proposals is contained in the Birmingham archive and no work seems to have been taken forward at that time.

In 1953, a more detailed proposal for a centre in Birmingham was submitted to the Archbishop by Maurice Foley. The suggested purpose of the centre would be ‘to assist the Irish immigrant workers to solve the many social problems with which they are faced, in order...[to] better fulfil their responsibilities in the church and in the community’. Foley’s model saw the centre fulfilling a co-ordination role, liaising with local education authorities, welfare and personnel departments of ‘principal firms’, Catholic priests and Catholic organisations. Surveys of jobs and accommodation would be undertaken. There should be arrangements for meeting new arrivals at the station, taking them to suitable accommodation, introducing them to their new

⁷⁰ Letter from Rev E.J. McCarthy to Masterson, 17 February 1952. Irish Centre, Birmingham 1952-63, AP/J6, BAA.

parish priest and other young people. All existing Irish societies should be involved and represented on the executive committee, which should be supported by three paid staff. Foley estimated the running costs at £3,000 per annum, which could be raised by 'a Dance' and donations from large firms. The scheme should be reviewed after three years to 'see if it is solving the problems it set out to solve. If not, it should be given a new orientation.'⁷¹ In contrast to either the Irish hierarchy's approach to migrant need or that of the London priests' committee, Foley identified social, economic and physical needs ahead of religious ones.

Possibly as a result of these approaches, a 'Priests' Meeting' was held at St. Chad's Cathedral to discuss the issues. The meeting notes recount the social and moral problems they identified. These included the problems of young Irish girls who came to England for domestic service in 'Catholic households...with their parents' blessing' but who soon left for 'more lucrative positions' in factories or public transport. Poor housing was associated with lack of cooking facilities, which in turn led to poor nutrition and a risk of contracting tuberculosis. Lack of leisure activities led to moral problems, which could also occur at work – 'friendships' leading to immorality between bus drivers and 'clippies' (bus conductresses) were cited as a particular example of this. The meeting concluded that steps must be taken to integrate the Irish into Birmingham life but that this must be based on 'training' the Irish to 'take the initiative themselves'. The model favoured by these priests was that proposed

⁷¹ Letter from Maurice Foley, YWC National Headquarters, London, to Archbishop Masterson, 20 January 1953. Irish Centre, Birmingham 1952-63, AP/J6, BAA.

by Foley in which the YCW would develop the leadership skills of Irish workers alongside English ones.⁷²

Despite the support for a model that would not have been focussed on the provision of a 'centre', it was the centre model which gained ground. The proposals were developed and progressed by Father Fitzsimons, the Irish Provincial of the Oblate Fathers, who was based in Dublin. His link to Birmingham was through the Parish of St. Anne's Digbeth, which was served by the Oblate Fathers and had a large Irish population. By 1957, suitable premises at Moat Row had been identified and the lease secured through a gift of £1,000 from McQuaid, whose support was based on the understanding that the centre would work for the integration of the Irish within the existing parish networks.⁷³ It also had the support of the Birmingham Archdiocese, which was happy for the Diocesan Trustees to be named on the lease. They considered that the objective of the centre would be to provide 'a central office...to deal with the problems of immigrants from Ireland' and required that it should be supervised by a 'committee of management'. Their only other stipulation was that, should hostel facilities be envisaged, these should be discussed with the already established St. Joseph's Hostel and Night Shelter, which was planning additional accommodation for Irish girls.⁷⁴ However, as with the London Irish Centre, dissenting voices were raised. One Birmingham parish priest wrote to the Archbishop querying whether the centre would function 'as a reception centre or

⁷² Notes of 'The Priests' Meeting held at St. Chad's', typed notes, undated, unsigned (from position in file, likely to date from 1951). Irish Centre, Birmingham, 1952-63, AP/16, BAA.

⁷³ Letter from McQuaid to Archbishop Grimshaw, 9 January 1957. Irish Centre, Birmingham, 1952-63, AP/J6, BAA.

⁷⁴ Letter from Archbishop Grimshaw to Father Fitzsimmons, 15 January 1957. Irish Centre, Birmingham, 1952-63, AP/J6, BAA. The hostel, at Princip Street, was run by the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul with the aim of providing accommodation to 'working girls'. It was not specifically for the Irish. See: 'Religious History: Religious Houses', *Victoria County History: A History of the County of Warwick: Volume 7: The City of Birmingham* (1964), 403-405 [consulted at: www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=22978 (3 December 2011)].

something more permanent'. He argued that ' 'Irish Centres' tend to make a 'problem' of our Irish brethren, and even to make them a kind of 'displaced people'. He argued that the provision of separate societies for the Irish hindered their integration into English parishes and should not be supported.⁷⁵

Archbishop Grimshaw responded with assurances that 'the prime purpose is to be an enquiry centre.'⁷⁶

The Birmingham Irish Centre was opened in June 1957 under the direction of an Oblate father working with Legion of Mary volunteers. The model was very similar to that of the CSWB and very much less extensive in scope or ambition than the London Irish Centre. The Centre planned to work closely with the CSWB and to have Legion volunteers meeting all trains at Birmingham (the 5.30 am train from Holyhead was specifically mentioned). The main work of the Centre would be the maintenance of a register of suitable accommodation and jobs; facilities were limited to a reading room and a television room.⁷⁷ The aim of the Centre was to 'provide essential assistance only' to the 'less fortunate' and it was emphasised that it 'must never take on the aspect of even a semi-permanent hostel.'⁷⁸ This was a marked contrast to the fully inclusive aims of the London Centre to provide all support that might be required by any Irish immigrant.

Unfortunately, from the start, the resources of the Birmingham Centre were insufficient to meet the demand. Within the first year, Father Murphy, the

⁷⁵ Letter from Father Denis Hickling, Parish Priest of St. Teresa's, Perry Bar, to Archbishop Grimshaw, 21 January 1957. Irish Centre, Birmingham, 1952-63, AP/J6, BAA.

⁷⁶ Letter from Grimshaw to Hickling, 23 January 1957. Irish Centre, Birmingham, 1952-63, AP/J6, BAA.

⁷⁷ Cutting from the *Irish Press*, 14 June 1957, giving an account of the launch of the Irish Centre. Irish Centre, Birmingham, 1952-63, AP/J6, BAA.

⁷⁸ Paper headed 'Birmingham "Irish Centre"', appears to be a press release. Undated but appears to date from time of opening of centre. Irish Centre, Birmingham, 1952-63, AP/J6, BAA.

director, was spending most of his time running a weekly football pool to generate funds and was bitter about the lack of support from wealthy Irish people in the city.⁷⁹ Submitting his first report to the Archbishop in November 1957, Father Murphy noted that they had dealt with 1,600 cases since opening. ‘Good Catholic’ accommodation had been found for all requesting it and information on welfare matters such as ‘National assistance’ entitlements had been given. The Legion had stopped meeting trains as the numbers needing assistance at this point were small. Murphy noted that people visited the Centre asking for financial assistance, something that they could not provide although in one or two ‘extreme cases’ fares back to Ireland or rent ‘until wages come through’ had been paid. Father Murphy had tried to pass this aspect of the work to the local St. Vincent de Paul Societies, but without success. The financial position was dire, particularly as the football pool stopped over the summer months and there had been very few donations from parishes. To make up the shortfall, Father Murphy had rented out the top floor rooms (the building had previously been a commercial hotel) to ‘five or six girls’, whose rents covered the costs of the centre and paid for a cleaner and cook. Father Murphy had also started selling religious goods and could count on a weekly collection from a local pub.⁸⁰ Whilst sympathetic, Grimshaw did not offer any practical help, noting ‘all priests tell me that those coming from Ireland take some time to learn the need there is over here to support the church regularly and well.’⁸¹

⁷⁹ Cutting from the Birmingham Mail, 16 November 1957. Irish Centre, Birmingham, 1952-63, AP/J6, BAA.

⁸⁰ Letter from Father Murphy to Grimshaw, 25 November 1957. Irish Centre, Birmingham, 1952-63, AP/J6, BAA.

⁸¹ Letter from Grimshaw to Murphy, 29 November 1957. Irish Centre, Birmingham, 1952-63, AP/J6, BAA.

Subsequent annual reports continued to stress difficulties over accommodation for new arrivals. However, these were not solely related to availability but also had a moral dimension. Murphy was concerned at the number of unmarried couples coming to the Centre expecting to be found accommodation together and who did not seem to realise the 'obvious dangers'. Worse was that some couples, who had clearly just met on the boat over, would purport to be 'husband and wife'. There were concerns that many landlords were happy for girls to have boyfriends in their rooms 'at any hour of the day or night'. The Centre would only recommend lodgings where 'the owners are particular about the good name of their house.'⁸² The Legion of Mary was active in looking for rough sleepers at night, but many of those found were not Irish. Murphy reported on 'seven men from Sheffield who, unbelievable though it sounds, had been sleeping in the public lavatories for a week.' The Birmingham reports provided a much more detailed breakdown of the type and numbers of cases presenting to the Centre than did the London reports. A breakdown of cases by gender, possession of money (or otherwise) and 'motivation' (a category Murphy used to indicate whether he thought the individual was after a hand-out or was genuinely trying to gain employment) was provided. Men, girls and couples with some money and motivation were found accommodation and employment where possible. Girls with no money were helped to find hotel or catering jobs where accommodation would be provided. Married couples with children and no money were advised, perhaps surprisingly, to 'consult the Police'. Men with no money and no interest in finding jobs were not helped. An additional source of work came from letters

⁸² Annual Report of the Birmingham Irish Centre, March 1959 to March 1960. Irish Centre, Birmingham, 1952-63, AP/J6, BAA.

written to the Centre by families in Ireland. These were usually complaining about children who had failed to write home, were proposing to marry a non-Catholic or were educating their children in non-Catholic schools. When visited, many of these were found to be 'neglecting their religious duties'. They were given advice and referred to their parish priests but whether this had any impact on the behaviours causing concern to their families was not recorded.⁸³

Increasing numbers of callers claiming to be in 'dire need' and demanding money caused Murphy to report in strong terms to Grimshaw in his 1961 report:

Numbers are growing in alarming proportions [and the staff] spend all their time looking into their almost helpless problems. Some of them are of the illiterate, travelling class but more frequently they belong to a much more objectionable class, the city slum type, indolent, impudent, expecting everything to be done for them. They seem to have lived on charity all their lives at home and expect to do at least just as well over here. They constantly threaten to give up the faith if they do not get the co-operation they expect but it would appear that that has been given up, or at least seriously neglected, before they came here. They will barter any sense of morality they ever possessed for the 'mess of pottage.'⁸⁴

Murphy was keen to disabuse his callers of the 'false notion' that the Irish Centre was a place 'where they can receive help when it is needed' and he stressed that the aim was to give 'advice not help'.⁸⁵

The Columbans tried to replicate the work they had done in London with Irish hotel workers, believing that similar numbers were likely in Birmingham and, as in London, would be difficult to integrate into existing parish structures due to their hours of work. This was supported by Grimshaw and resulted in the secondment of a second priest, based at the Irish Centre, but working specifically with the hotels. He received a favourable response from hotel

⁸³ Annual reports for 1959-60, 1960-61, 1961-62. Irish Centre Birmingham, 1952-63, AP/J6, BAA.

⁸⁴ Annual report for 1961-62. Irish Centre Birmingham, 1952-63, AP/J6, BAA.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

managers who frequently made a room available for him in which to meet with Irish staff. However, the Irish workers themselves responded less positively, often being 'employed when he called or...not interested'. Hopes of establishing a hotel workers' guild along the lines of the one in London appear to have been abandoned.⁸⁶ Similar lack of interest was found by the Legion of Mary in response to their attempts to get immigrants involved in Catholic action or Patrician groups.⁸⁷

Despite financial worries and the volume of work generated by callers to the Centre, Murphy attempted to take a strategic view of the problems presented. To help the 'misguided, who come here with the very definite intention of finding work', he proposed the establishment of a 'clearing centre' where new arrivals could stay until they had found a job, at which point they would be charged, in arrears, for their board and lodging. Long-term accommodation was not proposed – people would be directed to permanent accommodation once in work. Help would not be offered to 'the scrounger, who has been here for years and does not want to work'. Murphy wished to provide this facility for men and married couples, since accommodation for girls was already available at the Sisters of Charity hostel in Princip Street. He identified a property he felt would be suitable but was not encouraged by Grimshaw whose response was that the lease on the property was nearly expired and would be too expensive to renew.⁸⁸ Seeing no support for this proposal, Murphy moved on to develop a branch of the Catholic Housing Aid Society, replicating Casey's scheme to help young

⁸⁶ Irish Centre Annual Report, 1959-60. Irish Centre Birmingham, 1952-63, AP/J6, BAA.

⁸⁷ Irish Centre Annual Report, 1960-61. Irish Centre Birmingham, 1952-63, AP/J6, BAA.

⁸⁸ Letter from Father Murphy to Grimshaw, 14 June 1962 and response, 27 June 1962. Irish Centre Birmingham, 1952-63, AP/J6, BAA.

couples buy their own property; a plan which was supported by the Archbishop.⁸⁹

The Birmingham Irish Centre did expand to include the provision of welfare services to help migrants 'stand on [their] own two feet'. Expansion was not undertaken until the premises and funding to support it was available. In 1971, the Irish Episcopal Commission on Emigration overcame its previous reluctance to raise funds for emigrants in Ireland and held a national collection day.⁹⁰ A grant of £75,000 from this collection was presented to the Birmingham Archdiocese to adapt a former school building attached to St. Chad's Cathedral. Opened in 1974 as the 'Irish Welfare Centre' (IWC) it remained under the management of the Oblate Fathers and had two full-time social workers: a nun from the Irish Sisters of Charity and an Oblate brother. Hostel accommodation was available for 22 Irish 'boys' with the aim, like that of the London Centre, of 'get[ting] them when they first arrive' and avoiding their joining the large 'number of Irish drop-outs in Birmingham'.⁹¹ Since it was next to St. Chad's Cathedral, there was no need to provide any chapel facilities and hostel residents could join the general congregation at Mass and other activities. Unlike the London Centre, the Birmingham IWC did not diversify into the provision of Irish cultural and social activities and therefore remained closer to the English hierarchy policy of supporting integration into English Catholic life.

⁸⁹ Letter from Murphy to Grimshaw, 18 December 1962 and response, 28 December 1962. Irish Centre Birmingham, 1952-63, AP/J6, BAA.

⁹⁰ The Irish Episcopal Commission on Emigration was the successor body to the original Episcopal Committee for the Care of Emigrants established in 1953.

⁹¹ 'Birmingham Irish Centre Opened', *Catholic Herald*, 28th January 1974, p.8.

Conclusion

There are both similarities and differences in the factors that gave rise to and led to the subsequent development of two institutions, both termed ‘Irish Centres’, but which differed from each other in both aims and methods of delivery. In policy terms, both arose from ‘ground level’ rather than being imposed solutions from a higher level in the hierarchy. Indeed, they demonstrate that the hierarchy, and the individual dioceses, lacked clear structures and processes for setting a policy agenda or implementing decisions. This led to a diffusion of power throughout Catholic organisations, giving them, and individuals within them, considerable autonomy in developing and delivering their own responses to perceived needs.

The London Irish Centre was essentially the project of a small number of Irish priests, and particularly Fathers McNamara and Woods. They held a fixed view of the best way to respond to the Irish, through the provision of hostels catering for the physical, spiritual and social needs of the residents. This was at most tangentially based on any assessment of need, certainly not on any discussion with the potential client group; and showed no sign of being reviewed in the face of appropriate questioning of its appropriateness and sustainability (as Hubey Daly attempted to do). Whilst this may be seen as a weakness, it was also, in fact, a major strength as it enabled the individuals to pursue their goal, enthusiasm undiminished, over the many years in which they were unable to obtain funding. Although their model was recognised by others within the London dioceses as potentially conflicting with the stated aim of integrating the Irish fully within existing parishes, they were never told to desist. Indeed, they were given small donations by Griffin, which, if not large enough to be of

material help, certainly did not send a message of discouragement. The lack of formal structures for reporting or accountability also gave them considerable autonomy to develop the project as they saw fit. As described, this included committing to the purchase of the Camden premises without discussion with their own committee. The Archdiocese maintained a ‘hands off’ approach throughout, only becoming involved when issues of financial or management control threatened to cause problems for them. The hostel model was one based on a view of the newly arrived young Irish as being in need of care and control. The provision of accommodation in a Catholic hostel with suitable social and religious activities, would keep them away from commercial, usually Irish-run, dancehalls where they would fall under the influence of ‘undesirable types’, leading, at best, to cessation of religious practice and, at worst, to progression through delinquency to a life of crime. As Hubey Daly noted, they could never hope to house them all but they did not seem to have any strategy for targeting the most vulnerable. Thus, the girls’ hostel was busy over the summer months providing accommodation to students and teachers – not on the face of it groups at much risk. Neither, despite this being an issue that Daly raised, did they appear to have had a plan for moving residents on from the hostel to other accommodation. The charges for accommodation appear to have been at market rate and it is, therefore, not clear whether the most vulnerable would have been able to access it, since there are no records setting out policy for those unable to pay in the archive.

The experience in Birmingham was a more gradual evolution. Here, the initial instigator was someone from an organisation outside the structures of the Diocese, the Young Christian Workers. The original proposal, although it

acknowledged the accommodation problems then current in Birmingham, was intended to increase religious activity and leadership by the Irish, not only among themselves but so that they could more effectively evangelise their non-Catholic co-workers. Whereas the London model was based on the need to provide for the Irish, particularly the newly arrived, the YCW approach was to support them to take the initiative – through what would nowadays probably be termed a ‘leadership development’ approach. Unlike the London approach, this would not have required much capital and was not based on the acquisition of a building for any purpose. Foley’s subsequent idea for a centre which would co-ordinate the input of a variety of organisations was picked up by a group of Birmingham priests but did not progress. It is not clear why not, but the lack of highly motivated champions may have been a factor. As the YCW records are not held in the Diocesan archive, it is not clear whether any work did progress within that organisation alone. If it did, there is no evidence that it was linked to other work with Irish migrants in the Birmingham Archdiocese in the way that, for example, the Legion of Mary work was.

The proposal for an Irish Centre came not from within Birmingham but from people outside – initially a Columban Father from the US, with subsequent support from the Oblate Father Provincial in Ireland. The support of the Irish Provincial was probably key in obtaining a substantial donation from McQuaid, who received many requests for funding and was not in the habit of backing losers or sending good money after bad. However, what was understood by an ‘Irish Centre’ in Birmingham was markedly different from the London model. There was clarity that the Centre would offer advice and not help and those unwilling to help themselves were given short shrift. This contrasts with the

over-inclusive aim of the London Centre ‘to provide in any way for the spiritual, moral and welfare’ needs of the Irish. As in London, the reporting and accountability structures in Birmingham were vague. Although managed by the Oblate Fathers, it was to the Archbishop of Birmingham that the director of the centre made his reports and addressed his requests for advice. This probably reflected the continuing link to the diocesan hierarchy that the Centre had through the parish of St. Anne’s Digbeth. Additional funding for the Irish Centre was not a high priority for the Archdiocese and the burden of raising revenue funding therefore sat with the Centre director himself. Despite the time taken up with the daily struggle to make ends meet, Father Murphy found the energy to develop a branch of Catholic Housing Aid Society (CHAS), itself based on a model of ‘supported self-help’ rather than the London model of provision of all, for all.

The Birmingham Irish Centre can be seen as furthering the policy objective of the hierarchy in terms of integrating the Irish within existing parishes, since it limited its activities to the provision of advice, the work of CHAS was not limited only to the Irish (or indeed to Catholics) and the centre did not get involved in the provision of social or cultural activities specifically for the Irish. The London centre did and also encouraged the use of its premises by others for these purposes. The Birmingham Irish Centre moved from Moat Row to become the Irish Welfare and Information Centre (IWIC) in Shadwell Street in 1974. Those premises are no longer used for this purpose but the IWIC continues to operate through the ‘Irish in Birmingham HUB’ based at St. Anne’s Parish Centre in Digbeth. Advice on a range of social welfare and health issues

continues and a social and cultural programme is provided.⁹² There is also a sheltered housing scheme for Irish elders, named Father Joe Taaffe House after the spiritual director of the IWIC who died in 1996.⁹³ The current 'Irish Centre, Birmingham' is a commercial organisation offering bar facilities, function rooms and catering services. It makes facilities available for Irish cultural activities such as Gaelic lessons and Irish dancing.⁹⁴ Likewise the London Irish Centre continues to provide a range of welfare advice and support services, including a day centre for the elderly. A range of Irish cultural and social activities are regularly available. After years of financial difficulty, expenditure is underpinned by a commercial venture offering a range of catering and venue options including banqueting and conference facilities.⁹⁵ The continued demand for and success of such ventures indicates that the hierarchy's aim of achieving full integration of the Irish within English Catholicism was at variance with the wants, needs and preferences of at least some of the Irish themselves.

⁹² See website <www.irishinbirmingham.com> (3 December 2011).

⁹³ 'The late Father Joe Taaffe, Knock and Birmingham', *Connaught Telegraph*, 4th September 1996 [consulted at: <http://www.mayo-ireland.ie/Mayo/News/ConnTel/96Sep/96Sep04/FrTaaffe.htm>, 1 (September 2012)].

⁹⁴ Details are available at the club website: <www.irishcentreirmingham.co.uk> (3 December 2011).

⁹⁵ See website: <www.londonirishcentre.org> (3 December 2011).

Chapter 4: British and Irish Government Policy on Irish Migrants, 1940-1972

Introduction

During the Second World War, the British government actively recruited Irish labour, with the co-operation of the Irish government, to staff the expanding war industries. The period after the Second World War to the mid-1960s, was one of high migration internationally. This included the resettlement of around two million persons displaced as a result of the war. Subsequently, a number of countries, including Canada, Australia and Argentina, actively encouraged immigration to develop their population bases and increase labour capacity at a time of economic growth and multiple labour-intensive infrastructure projects. These immigration programmes relied on their ability to encourage people to leave their home country for the promise of a better economic future abroad.¹ Migration from Ireland to Britain fits within the general pattern of economic migration from a static economy to an expanding one but differed in that it was short-distance allowing relatively unplanned decisions to move in the knowledge that return would be relatively easy.

The movement of economically active individuals (possibly accompanied by dependents) from the labour force of one sovereign state to another raises policy issues for both sending and receiving nations. Restricting the right to emigrate of persons in employment or with qualifications believed to be essential to the economy of the home state is usually seen as an unjustifiable violation of individual rights, at least in democracies. Government interventions in sending

¹ Anonymous, 'Migration and History', Section 1.3 in International Organization for Migration, Essentials of Migration Management, Volume One: Migration Management Foundations, p.15 [consulted at: http://www.rcmvs.org/documentos/IOM_EMM/v2/V2S06_CM.pdf (5 September 2012)].

countries often take the form of prescribing recruitment practices and standard employment contracts through regulatory processes or legislation. Governments may also address issues such as preparation courses for intending migrants and safeguarding the interests of migrants abroad. In committing resources for migrants, governments have to consider the wider needs of the home community. Migrants are often seen as a privileged group who are better off than those remaining at home. Diverting funds to create services specifically for them may be seen as creating further advantages for an already privileged group and may not be popular policy.² Receiving countries need to consider how to balance requirements for foreign labour against the need to protect the interests of the local labour force, whether to manage admission of foreign workers explicitly against demand for labour in the economy or whether to allow migrants to enter without a job offer. Right of residence may be temporary and subject to specified conditions and visa requirements or permanent and unrestricted. Governments need to consider what access to social, health and other welfare benefits will be granted to migrants and whether any programmes to facilitate integration and diffuse potential social tension between migrant and host communities are needed.³

This chapter considers the policy approaches taken by the British and Irish governments, as the receiving and sending countries respectively, towards Irish migration during the Second World War and the subsequent decades. During this time, the Irish government declined policy calls to regulate the recruitment of Irish labour or to restrict the emigration of vulnerable groups (minors and young women). Provision of funding to support welfare or cultural services for

² Anonymous, 'Migration and Labour', Section 2.6, pp.18-19 [consulted at: http://www.rcmvs.org/documentos/IOM_EMM/v2/V2S06_CM.pdf (5 September 2012)].

³ Ibid., pp.11-16.

migrants was declined on the basis that migrants were at least as well off as the home population and could have no priority call on public resources. British government policy facilitated the free entry of Irish labour throughout the period. During the war, the government directed recruitment and deployment in conjunction with employers. Subsequently, policy shifted to one of unrestricted entry and freedom to participate in the British labour market. This was explicitly based on acknowledgement of ongoing need for additional labour and preference for the Irish over other groups, particularly ‘coloured’ Commonwealth immigrants. To ensure the continued supply of Irish labour, the government was prepared to create a special category for the Irish of ‘not foreign’ which ensured that in all practical respects the Irish enjoyed similar rights and access to benefits as British citizens.

British government policy

Kathleen Paul has demonstrated that British Government policy in the aftermath of the Second World War was driven by the desire to use Irish labour as an additional pool to meet the needs of the British economy. Ireland was uniquely placed to provide a reservoir of labour which had at least primary education, spoke English, could travel easily between Britain and Ireland allowing rapid surge in numbers when labour was required (and return when it was not) and was, above all, white.⁴ To this end, successive British governments ensured that the Irish in Britain, although clearly citizens of a sovereign state which was not, after 1948, even part of the Commonwealth, continued to enjoy rights commensurate with those of UK citizens, including right of entry, right to take

⁴ Kathleen Paul, ‘A Case of Mistaken Identity: The Irish in Postwar Britain’, *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 49 (1996), pp.116-142; and Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Postwar Era* (New York, 1997), pp.90-110.

up any employment and access to welfare benefits. The means for achieving this was through the legislative framework, beyond which, for most of the period, little else in the way of policy was considered to be required. As Paul has pointed out, the 1948 British Nationality Act effectively created a unique status for Irish nationals who could enjoy 'all the privileges and many of the responsibilities' of British citizenship without actually being citizens.⁵ To achieve this, the British government effectively created a third category of 'not foreign', to distinguish the Irish from British subjects and subjects of other sovereign states who were defined as 'alien'.⁶

Post-war policy towards Irish immigration was a response to economic expansion and labour shortage and drew on the positive experience of using Irish labour to support industrial output during the war. However, only a decade or so earlier, when the economy had been contracting, attitudes to Irish immigration had not been so positive, particularly in Scotland where high levels of Irish immigration had been a feature for over a century. In the late 1920s, the British Cabinet considered legislation to restrict the entry of Irish residents, to restrict employment to work for which local labour could not be found and to enable repatriation of Irish immigrants who were unable to support themselves within a specified time of arrival. It was recommended that women entering Scotland for work in domestic service should be exempted from any restrictions, presumably because these vacancies could not be filled internally.⁷ Thus, even at this stage, attitudes to Irish immigration were contingent on the needs of the

⁵ Paul, 'A Case of Mistaken Identity', p.90.

⁶ Cabinet: Ireland: Report of Working Party, Memorandum by the Prime Minister. Cabinet Papers, CAB/129/32, The National Archive (hereafter TNA).

⁷ Conclusions of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W.1 on Wednesday, August 11 1928 (Conclusion 10: Scotland: Immigration from Ireland). Cabinet Papers, CAB 23/58, TNA.

British economy and labour market and the desire to use Irish labour as a reservoir for this when it suited. This legislation had been proposed by an Inter-Department Conference and had the support of the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Scotland. The decision of the Cabinet was, however, not to proceed with legislation but to carry out further investigation on the extent of Irish migration, the impact that any change in legislation would have particularly on migrants from Northern Ireland, which the cabinet ‘were reminded, [was] an integral part of the United Kingdom’, and on the willingness of the Irish government to agree an approach to repatriation of immigrants who had ‘become a charge on the Poor Law’.⁸

In addition to the economic arguments around immigration, the Government also received representations from those concerned that Irish immigration was having an undesirable impact on the areas where they settled. This was the view of a delegation from the Scottish churches to the Home Secretary, William Joynson-Hicks, in 1929 and their concern was particularly around immigration from the Irish Free State, suggesting that sectarianism may have underlain their views. Linking this to the legislation already suggested to the Cabinet, described above, Joynson-Hicks requested ‘a senior member of [his] immigration staff’ to draft a report after discussions with the Scottish Office, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Health and Board of Trade. These inquiries demonstrated an issue which was to resurface in later government reports – namely the difficulty of defining precisely who fell within the definition of the term ‘Irish’ and, additionally, the difficulty of identifying a consistent ‘Irish’ component in routine statistical information. The overall conclusions of

⁸ Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held at 10, Downing Street, S.W.1 on Wednesday, August 1928 (Conclusion 10: Scotland: Immigration from Ireland). Cabinet Papers, CAB 23/58, TNA.

Joynson-Hicks' inquiry were that current levels of Irish immigration to Scotland were comparatively low and that the number of Irish claiming Poor Law assistance, as a proportion of total claimants, had fallen rather than risen. The Irish contributed around 25 per cent to the total of criminal convictions but the definition included those born in Northern Ireland and those born anywhere of an Irish father. An update to this report, published in 1930, indicated that the 'Irish' component of overall criminal convictions had by then fallen to 17.1 per cent and, furthermore, that half of these were for 'persons born in Northern Ireland, or elsewhere of Northern Ireland fathers.'⁹ Figures were presented for Catholic marriages, which accounted for around 10 per cent of the total. No explanation was provided for including statistics on 'Catholics' within a review of the 'Irish'. Presumably this indicates a conflation of 'Irish' with 'Catholic' and links to concerns about Irish settlement impacting on the traditions of Scottish (Protestant) life, which may have been taken as self-evident by the report's intended audience. Irish lunatics contributed 4.3 per cent of the total of 'private lunatics' and 6.5 per cent of 'pauper lunatics'. The figures as presented did little to demonstrate an impact, either positive or negative, of Irish (whether from the Free State or Northern Ireland) immigration on Scottish economic or social structures.

Joynson-Hicks did not contest the view that 'the numbers of Irish already in Scotland and their tendency to multiply at a rate disproportionate to the native population [was] a matter for serious concern' and could present a threat to 'the continuity of Scottish life and traditions'. However, in view of the evidence that immigration was falling, Joynson-Hicks concluded that 'the mischief...has

⁹⁹ Cabinet, Irish Immigration into Scotland: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Scotland (William Adamson), 21 July, 1930. Cabinet Papers, CAB/24/213, TNA.

already been done' and that new immigration contributed little to the 'position created by the presence in Scotland of a large body of persons of Irish extraction', particularly in those areas in which 'they segregate themselves...[and] can...exercise a considerable and admittedly undesirable influence.' However, he dismissed 'wholesale repatriation' of the 'Irish and their descendants' as 'out of the question' but suggested that some alleviation of the problems could be achieved by repatriating new immigrants who became 'a charge on the rates' 'within a fixed period of their arrival in Scotland.' The legal mechanism for enforceable repatriation, via Sheriff's warrant, had ceased with the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922. Establishment of a new legal framework for this would require reciprocal legislation by the two states involved. This was being attempted but the Taoiseach had shown 'little inclination to assist.' Beyond this, the main suggestion was that Scottish employers should be encouraged to look for local labour since 'lack of demand for Irish labour' would discourage further immigration.¹⁰

The implication of these documents is that the Irish were associated with delinquency, lunacy, pauperism and Catholicism – all of which could pose a threat to existing society. However, these beliefs were difficult to substantiate with hard evidence and analysis was further complicated by difficulties in achieving a definition of 'Irish'. There was an expressed desire to exclude Irish immigrants from the Scottish labour market during a time of economic hardship. However, even during this economically difficult period exceptions were made for members of an otherwise 'undesirable' group who could still serve unmet needs – Irish women meeting the demand for domestic servants who could not

¹⁰ Cabinet, Irish Immigration: Memorandum by the Home Secretary, William Joynson-Hicks, 20 February, 1929. Cabinet Papers, CAB/24/201, TNA.

be recruited within the British population. In this case, the utility of Irish women in filling vacant posts seems to have outweighed any consideration of the potential damage they might do to the traditions of society by virtue of their risk of contracting Catholic marriages and producing Catholic children at a disproportionate rate.

Although Jackson considers that fears about Irish immigrants taking British jobs persisted throughout the 1930s, in England as well as Scotland, this was not translated into any further policy or legislative proposals.¹¹ The advent of the Second World War, and the need for workers to provide labour to war industries, shifted the Government's priority to ensuring a continuous flow of labour from Ireland over any concerns about the effect of this on the host society. Although restrictions on travel between the United Kingdom and Ireland were imposed from 1940, the recruitment of workers for industry was facilitated and managed by the Ministry of Labour through a Permit Office in Dublin (as discussed in Chapter 1). In 1941, the British Ministry of Labour and National Service reached an agreement with the Irish Department of Industry and Commerce to enable the movement of unemployed Irish labour to war industries with labour shortage.¹² For political reasons, the Irish government could not be seen to be supporting the active recruitment of labour for Britain and for that reason recruitment depended on individual workers registering at Irish employment exchanges and themselves stating that they sought work in Britain.¹³ Once they had so identified themselves, they could be interviewed at Irish labour exchanges by representatives of British employers authorised by the

¹¹ Jackson, *Irish in Britain*, p.97.

¹² Anonymous, 'The Transfer of Irish Workers to Great Britain: Communication to the International Labour Office from the Ministry of Labour and National Service in Great Britain', *International Labour Review*, 48 (1943), p.338.

¹³ Ibid.

Ministry of Labour Liaison Officer in Dublin. Employer representatives could not openly advertise for recruits but ‘their presence in particular districts...stimulate[d] workers to volunteer.’¹⁴ Recruitment was streamlined by collaboration between the main ministries involved, those of Aircraft Production and War Transport, and the Ministry of Labour. Rather than recruiting separately, firms collaborated through representatives acting for the industry as a whole, for example, the Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors managed recruitment on behalf of a large number of infrastructure firms.¹⁵ When recruited in this way, the worker would not know which firm he would be working for, or details of pay and conditions, until immediately prior to travel. Once given an offer of employment, each worker had to apply to their local police station for a travel permit which would be issued by the Irish Permit Office in Dublin.¹⁶ These were usually collected by the employers’ representatives who would meet the workers in Dublin to issue them with ‘journey money’ and tickets for the crossing. Notification of travel was sent to the Ministry of Labour office at Holyhead, where employers’ representatives met the arriving workers to manage the onward journey to their destination and place of work. Once in Britain, Irish workers were eligible for various grants, for example a lodging allowance for those maintaining a home in Ireland, on the same basis as workers transferred from their homes elsewhere in Britain.¹⁷ Arrangements to return home for visits could be made subject to travel restrictions and the needs of particular employment, and workers were entitled to up to two travel warrants for this per year. The Ministry of Labour appointed

¹⁴ Ibid., pp.339-340.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.340.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.341.

a 'Welfare Officer for Irish Labour' whose duty it was to oversee living conditions of Irish labour, particularly in camps attached to construction sites, and to investigate any complaints.¹⁸ As will be discussed in Chapter 6 in respect of Birmingham, Ministry of Labour officials had discretion to encourage and fund specific provision for Irish workers where they identified a welfare need that could not be met through arrangements for British transferred workers. The centrality of Catholicism to Irish identity was acknowledged, or assumed, by the Ministry's encouragement to employers to ensure reasonable facilities for the performance of religious duties by Roman Catholic workers.¹⁹ However, in some ways Irish workers were at a disadvantage compared to their British counterparts in that they were unable to bring their spouses and family members over to Britain, they were required to register their place of residence with the local police and any change of job was controlled by the Ministry of Labour. Jackson notes that these powers of control were used to direct Irish labour to essential, but often unattractive, jobs for which British labour could not be recruited. He argues that this was the result of the need to prioritise the country's needs rather than a direct attempt to discriminate against the Irish who were, in any case, aware of the conditions before they accepted employment in Britain.²⁰

With the cessation of hostilities, the British government gradually relaxed travel, employment and movement restrictions and these were finally removed at the end of 1947 when the Passenger Traffic Order, 1942, under which controls had been permitted, was allowed to lapse. During 1946-47, the Ministry of Labour continued to manage the recruitment of Irish labour for

¹⁸ Ibid., p.342.

¹⁹ Ibid.,

²⁰ Jackson, *Irish in Britain*, p.103.

specific industries key to post-war reconstruction. These included coal mining, metal manufacture, nursing and agriculture.²¹ The continued governmental involvement in recruitment from Ireland at this time, should be set in the context of government policy on recruitment of workers from other immigrant groups to take up positions which could not be filled with British labour. To this end, the post-war Labour government not only looked to Ireland as a source of suitable labour but also to the Displaced Persons camps in Europe, where a source of mainly Eastern European labour was to be found. The shortage of labour made the government open to relaxation of immigration controls albeit that this was linked to circumscribed employment opportunities in what MPs described as ‘bottom jobs’. Filling these roles, it was argued, would require ‘constant inflow from those nations where the standard of living is lower and where our bottom jobs appear to be jobs of luxury.’²² Between October 1946 and December 1949, 91,951 workers entered Great Britain through this scheme; a figure that compares with 96,804 persons receiving new travel permits to leave Ireland for employment during 1947-1949.²³ Both the Irish and Eastern European workers (rapidly renamed European Voluntary Workers in preference to the derogatory term ‘Displaced Persons’) could be directed to those industries where labour was needed. However, there was a price to pay for these recruitment policies in that both groups had certain rights to remain in Great Britain. For the Irish, this derived from legislation giving them, once wartime restrictions had been removed, right of entry and access to welfare schemes. Although Eastern Europeans had no automatic right to remain in Britain and could theoretically be

²¹ Ibid., p.104.

²² Parliamentary debate on Displaced Persons, 14 February 1947, quoted in Diana Kay and Robert Miles, ‘Refugees or Migrant Workers? The Case of the European Volunteer Workers in Britain (1946-1951)’, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 1 (1988), p.215.

²³ Ibid., p. 217; and Jackson, *Irish in Britain*, p.195.

deported if found unsuitable or undesirable, in practice, their refugee status made this difficult, as they had no state to which they could be deported. The great advantage of the Irish as a flexible source of labour lay in their cultural similarities, shared language and the proximity of their homeland which meant that in times of economic downturn a proportion, at least, would return home of their own accord. Experience with Eastern Europeans was not so positive, the Poles, particularly, being considered 'poor quality' labour and a 'particularly difficult people to assimilate.'²⁴ It is also worth noting that, even during the period that Ministry of Labour schemes for recruitment of Irish labour were operative, Irish men and women could still enter Britain for employment arranged outside the government scheme, provided that (during the period of travel restriction) a British employment exchange had confirmed that the job was necessary and could not be filled by a British worker. Thus, the Irish could still take up professional occupations, in medicine, law or teaching for example. This opportunity was denied the Eastern European workers who, regardless of their qualifications, could only be recruited to the low-skilled industrial jobs included in the government scheme. The restrictions on employment for these workers were largely removed by 1952.²⁵

Apart from issues about quality of work and cultural dissimilarity, Eastern European workers were only available as a result of the immediate post-War conditions and the existence of potential labour within Displaced Persons camps. This was not a sustainable source of labour in the way that Ireland was

²⁴ Kay and Miles, 'Refugees or Migrant Workers?', p.219. In addition to the 91,000 Eastern Europeans entering under the European Volunteer Workers scheme, 128,000 people of Polish origin settled in Britain under the terms of the Polish Resettlement Act, 1947. Jackson estimates that up to 144,000 Irish citizens entered Britain for employment between 1946-50, making Eastern Europeans numerically more significant during this period, see Jackson, *Irish in Britain*, p.195.

²⁵ Kay and Miles, 'Refugees or Migrant Workers?', p.230.

likely to be. By the 1950s, the role of the Ministry of Labour in recruitment and direction of Irish labour had ceased as employers took over this function directly themselves. From the late 1940s, a third source of potential labour for Britain had emerged in the shape of Commonwealth immigrants. The fact that most of those coming to Britain were 'coloured', led the Home Secretary, Gwilym Lloyd-George, to convene an inter-departmental committee to report on the 'social and economic problems to which this was giving rise.'²⁶ The report consisted of a detailed briefing to Cabinet on the findings together with a summary suitable for publication. Although the report specified in its title that it was concerned with 'the growing influx into the United Kingdom of coloured workers from other Commonwealth countries', 'citizens of the Republic of Ireland' were specifically included within the terms of reference, despite their being neither 'coloured' nor from another Commonwealth country. However, the report to the Cabinet stressed that no readily available evidence could be found to demonstrate the social or economic consequences of the 'Irish influx'. The committee acknowledged that, in the past, Irish settlement had tended to concentrate in 'certain quarters of big cities' but they considered that there was no reason to suppose that Irish arriving since the war had 'concentrated' in such areas. In the Cabinet document, the committee expressed the view that:

Many of the Irish are accustomed to living in their own country in conditions which English people would not normally tolerate and are accordingly less discriminating in their choice of accommodation here.

This derogatory description of the Irish was missing from version intended for publication. In this, the phrasing regarding living conditions 'in their own

²⁶ Cabinet: Colonial Immigrants: Note by the Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister for Welsh Affairs, 18 August, 1955. Cabinet Papers, CAB/129/77, TNA.

country' and expectations in Britain was retained, verbatim, but was applied to 'coloured people', not the Irish.²⁷

Complaints had been received from local authorities that the Irish often lived in 'condemned premises' thereby establishing a prior claim on council housing – whether by deliberate intent or not is unclear. However, the committee concluded that any housing difficulties suffered or caused by the Irish were minimal compared to those experienced by 'coloured people'. Thus, it was claimed that an Irishman seeking lodgings would be unlikely 'to have any more difficulty than an Englishman, whereas the coloured man is often turned away.' Overall, the conclusion of the committee was that, compared to coloured immigrants,

the outstanding difference is that the Irish are not – whether they like it or not – a different race from the ordinary inhabitants of Great Britain, and indeed one of the difficulties in any attempt to estimate the economic or social consequences of the influx from the Republic would be to define who are Irish.²⁸

This marks a shift in government thinking over the period 1929 to 1955 in that, in the earlier part of the period, at least in Scotland, there was implicit agreement that the Irish did have a potentially adverse social and economic impact on the host community, even though this was difficult to define from available data. Now, the official line was to state strongly that they were in no way different from the indigenous inhabitants of Great Britain and, indeed, could not be differentiated from them. In policy terms, that effectively closed the debate about any particular needs of the Irish since clearly they had none – their needs

²⁷ Draft Statement on Colonial Immigrants, para 11, Appendix to Report of the Committee on the Social and Economic Problems Arising from the Growing Influx into the United Kingdom of Coloured Workers from Other Commonwealth Countries, August 1955. Cabinet Papers, CAB129/77, TNA.

²⁸ Report of the Committee on the Social and Economic Problems Arising from the Growing Influx into the United Kingdom of Coloured Workers from Other Commonwealth Countries. Cabinet Papers, CAB/129/77, TNA.

were the same as anyone else's and could, therefore, be met within general policy arrangements to which they enjoyed equal access.

In 1961, the Irish were again included in legislation, this time almost by chance. At this time, the British government's concerns were focussed on 'coloured' Commonwealth immigration from the West Indies and the Indian sub-continent. Coloured immigration had been rising rapidly from a level of 21,000 in 1959, 57,700 in 1960 to a forecast of 100,000 for 1961. The government wished to control levels to avoid pressure on social housing and social tension arising from 'large unassimilated coloured communities'. The government accepted that restriction of coloured immigration could not be justified on the basis of employment, health or public order but concluded that, since assimilation did not appear to be taking place, restriction on numbers was a 'sad necessity'.²⁹ Numbers were to be limited through a voucher system operated by the Ministry of Labour. Entry vouchers would be issued to those with a confirmed job offer and those with professional or technical qualifications. A limited number of vouchers would be available each year, on a 'first come first served' basis, to those with neither a job nor higher qualifications. Entry of those of independent means and students was not restricted.³⁰ At Bill stage, these provisions would technically have applied to the Irish although it was appreciated that applying them in practice would be impossible.³¹ In its final form, the Commonwealth Immigrants Act, 1962 did

²⁹ Cabinet: Commonwealth Migrants, Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, 6 October 1961. Cabinet Papers, CAB/129/107, p.1, TNA.

³⁰ Ibid., p.2.

³¹ Ibid., p.3.

not apply any restrictions to Irish immigration.³² However, within the legislation, the government made provision for the deportation of both Commonwealth and Irish citizens convicted of crimes punishable by imprisonment.³³ Prior to the 1962 legislation there had been no legal mechanism for deportation of offenders in these groups. Under the 1962 legislation, Commonwealth and Irish citizens could be deported provided they did not have a 'specified connection' with the United Kingdom by birth, descent or citizenship and had not been 'ordinarily resident' for more than five years.³⁴ Courts could recommend deportation of Irish and Commonwealth citizens and offenders had a right of appeal to the Home Secretary, who was responsible for signing deportation orders. Reporting on the operation of the Act in 1964, Henry Brooke, then Home Secretary, reported that over 1,000 recommendations for deportation had been made since June 1962, of which slightly over half were Irish. Some of these were either quashed on appeal or not progressed at Brooke's discretion, resulting in the actual deportation of 261 Irish citizens between June 1962 and February 1964. Brooke noted that whilst Irish citizens could be deported, there was nothing to stop them re-entering the UK subsequently. Sixty had already been convicted of returning, nine of whom had returned more than once.³⁵

The British government did not routinely publish statistics on offenders by nationality or place of birth, either at the point of conviction or deportation.

³² For a fuller discussion of the Act see Mary J. Hickman, 'Reconstructing and deconstructing race: British political discourses about the Irish in Britain', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22 (1998), pp.299-304.

³³ Cabinet: Operation of the Immigration Control under the Commonwealth Immigrants Act, Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Home Office, 22 April 1964. Cabinet Papers, CAB127/117, p.3, TNA.

³⁴ Ibid., p.3.

³⁵ Ibid., pp.3-4.

However, during the mid-1960s, information on numbers of deportations of Irish citizens was requested through Parliamentary questions. Responding to such a question in March 1965, the Home Secretary reported that between June 1962 and February 1965, a total of 699 deportation orders had been made on Commonwealth and Irish citizens and aliens, of which 423 (60 per cent) were Irish.³⁶

British government policy on Irish migration can be summarised as one of facilitation whilst reserving the right to deport those convicted of serious offences who had no specific connection with the UK and had not been long-term residents. As noted above, achieving permanent exclusion of those deported was not an easy matter, but the government could not identify any practicable solution to this.³⁷ In 1970, the government summarised its position on Irish immigrants thus: ‘an Irish citizen is not a British subject but is treated the United Kingdom as if he were. He is not an alien under United Kingdom law.’³⁸ Beyond this, no further specific policy was considered to be required.

Irish government policy

Whereas the British government was responding to an influx within their borders and attempting to decide whether or not this presented any problems requiring a policy response; the Irish government was responding to a loss of population through emigration and determining what, if any, responsibility it

³⁶ Question from Mr Kitson to Sir F. Soskice (written answer): Immigrants (Deportations), Hansard, HC Deb 11 March 1965, Vol 708, c104W [consulted at: http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1965/mar/11/immigrants-deportations#S5CV0708P0_19650311_CWA_115 (1 September 2012)].

³⁷ Operation of Immigration Control, Memorandum, p.4. CAB127/117, TNA.

³⁸ Response of Lord Shackleton to Lord O’Hagan: Irish Citizens and Aliens Law, Hansard, HL Deb 19 February 1970, Vol 307, cc1284-5 [consulted at: http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1970/feb/19/irish-citizens-and-aliens-law#S5LV0307P0_19700219_HOL_38 (1 September 2012)].

had for the welfare of its citizens in Britain, beyond the provision of traditional consular services.

Mary Daly describes the impact of British restrictions on imports reaching Ireland from January 1941 and resultant closure or short-time working of Irish factories due to shortage of fuel or raw materials, leading to a rise in unemployment. Daly argues that the Irish government faced a choice between implementing a scheme of public works to employ surplus labour or facilitating emigration. Since the restrictions on imports of fuel and raw materials would have an effect on public works as much as on private industry, this was not a viable option regardless of whether or not the Treasury could have funded it.³⁹ The government was, therefore, left with little choice but to facilitate emigration in a way which could not be seen, for political reasons, to go as far as active collaboration with the British.⁴⁰ The Irish government maintained the appearance of an equal partner in the transfer of labour project by forbidding the open advertisement of employment opportunities in Britain within the Irish state, requiring that the unemployed register with Irish employment exchanges and themselves express a desire to seek employment in Britain, and maintaining the requirement for anyone offered a job in Britain to obtain a travel permit through their local garda station in order to leave. This last requirement enabled the Irish government to refuse permits either to individuals they considered a security risk or to members of definable groups whose remaining in Ireland could be argued to be in the national interest. Within the latter were included persons in employment, those for whom employment was available, persons

³⁹ Daly, *The Slow Failure*, p.146.

⁴⁰ 'The Transfer of Irish Workers to Britain', p.338.

under 22 years of age and men with experience in agricultural or turf work.⁴¹ It is not clear to what extent the Irish authorities imposed these restrictions, although it appears that this was variable. For example, in August 1941, the Department of Industry and Commerce issued a memorandum instructing that travel permits should not be denied to anyone ‘unless it is clear that there is employment for him in the Free State producing food or fuel’.⁴² However, the restrictions did give the government leverage to retaliate in the face of British government actions that were seen to be detrimental. Thus, Jackson argues that the Irish had been prepared to agree a centralised recruitment plan to transfer workers to Britain. However, after the British government imposed travel restrictions between Ireland and Britain in March 1944, as part of the security arrangements for Operation Overlord, the Irish government responded by refusing further registration of Irish workers for British employment.⁴³ However, in June 1944, the Irish government removed their restrictions, except for non-professional workers from rural areas. The British travel restrictions had ‘seriously interfered with the flow of Irish labour’ and the British government was keen to relax them, which it did at the end of July 1944.⁴⁴ Thus, apart from the interruption described above, throughout the war the Irish government was largely co-operative in maintaining the flow of labour to Britain. As described, there were few restrictions on the emigration of men and none at all on women. The free movement of women was queried in Ireland as there were ‘plenty of complaints of the difficulty of obtaining domestics...and

⁴¹ ‘Transfer of Irish Labour to Britain’, pp.338-339.

⁴² Memorandum from the Department of Industry and Commerce, 18 August 1941. Department of the Taoiseach, Irish Labour, Emigration to Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 1940-44, s11582A, The National Archives of Ireland (hereafter NAI).

⁴³ Jackson, *Irish in Britain*, p.99.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp.101-102; ‘Overlord’ Security. Duration of Special Restrictions. Report by Sir Findlater Stewart, 5 July 1944. War Cabinet Papers, CAB/66/52/24, TNA.

other categories of female labour'. This raised the question of whether a 'subject to no suitable employment being available' restriction should also be applied to travel permits for women. It was suggested that the reason for women seeking employment in Britain was that this was done through employment exchanges whereas recruitment to domestic work was usually through informal means, thereby making it difficult to link women presenting at employment exchanges with local domestic vacancies. This appears rather a simplistic explanation but, whether it was accepted or not, no restrictions on travel permits for women were introduced, despite the fact that, throughout the war period, the majority of Irish women leaving for Britain did so for employment in domestic service.⁴⁵

The issue of travel permits was closely monitored by the Irish government and was frequently the subject of questions in Dail debates.⁴⁶ In 1946, female migrants formed 64 per cent of the total and 43 per cent of them were under 21 years old, compared with only 16 per cent of the males.⁴⁷ The pattern of emigration so clearly illustrated by the travel permits prompted a reaction from those beyond the immediate circle of politicians and government departments. Prominent individuals such as Aodh de Blacam, journalist and commentator on Irish national identity, and groups such as the Mellifont Conference, on behalf of the Catholic hierarchy and laity, submitted calls for the government to tackle

⁴⁵ Memorandum from the Department of External Affairs, 9 May 1944. Department of the Taoiseach, Irish Labour, Emigration, s11582B, NAI; Memorandum from the Department of Industry and Commerce, Statistics Branch, April 1944. Department of the Taoiseach, Emigration of Workers to Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Statistical Returns, 1939-1944, s12728A, NAI.

⁴⁶ See the many statistical returns in Department of the Taoiseach, Emigration of Workers to Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Statistical Returns, 1939 to June 1944, s12728A; and Emigration of Workers, Monthly Returns, June 1944 to December 1948, s12728B, NAI.

⁴⁷ Memorandum for the Government from the Department of Industry and Commerce, 7 June 1947. Department of the Taoiseach, Emigration of Workers, Monthly Returns, June 1944 to December 1948, s12728B, NAI.

emigration through banning recruitment to foreign jobs through Irish labour exchanges, banning 'seductive advertisements' for jobs in England and issuing travel permits to minors only with written agreement from parents. Those calling for such restrictions had less to offer by way of suggestions for expanding the economy to reduce the impetus to emigration.⁴⁸

In 1948, the Irish Government announced a 'Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems' to investigate the social and economic effects not only of emigration but other Irish demographic measures including birth, marriage and death rates. Underpinning the Commission's characterisation of the Irish population problems and suggested remedies, was a wealth of statistical material covering the period from the Famine to the Census of 1951.⁴⁹

Publication of the Commission's full report was delayed until 1955, not least because the Commission members struggled to reach a consensus – with the result that a Minority Report was published alongside the official one.⁵⁰ The Commission concluded that there were 'two great population problems' which had deleterious consequences for Ireland – the low marriage rate and emigration. Indeed, by virtue of the 'discontent and unsettlement' it caused, the low marriage rate compounded emigration. The consequences of emigration included reduced population size with a greater proportion of dependent elderly. Reduced competition for resources improved the standard of living of those who remained but removed any compelling need for economic development. On the other hand, the Irish diaspora gave Ireland a disproportionate significance

⁴⁸ Aodh de Blacam, Emigration: Cause and Cure, memorandum for the Cabinet Economic Committee May 1948. Department of the Taoiseach, Private Office, 97/9/829, NAI; and Aodh de Blacam, Rural depopulation: report by Aodh de Blacam, 1947. Department of the Taoiseach, Private Office, 97/9/780, NAI.

⁴⁹ W.J.L. Ryan, 'Some Irish Population Problems', *Population Studies* 9, 2 (1955), pp.185-188.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.188; Daly, *The Slow Failure*, pp.124-126.

abroad, although ‘emigration may have weakened “national pride and confidence” and retarded...national progress.’ There was no doubt that economically emigrants were better off at their destinations than if they had remained at home and they may have ‘helped the cause of Christianity’ in many countries. Some, however, may have ‘succumbed to the temptations of city life’...with ‘moral and religious deterioration’.⁵¹ The economist, W.J.L. Ryan, concluded that the Commission had struggled to reach a view on whether emigration was a good thing, or not. He noted that, while ‘there [was] a highly vocal prejudice against it’, its ‘material effects’ were ‘mainly favourable’. He concluded that the Commission’s final position was to separate effects on individuals from those on communities. Thus, emigration was generally bad at community level due to its impact on population growth. For the individual, emigration was bad if it was involuntary, if it resulted from lack of economic development at home, if the emigrant would be ‘worse off materially and morally’, and if it resulted in family break up (defined as the ‘separation of the father from his wife and children’). When these factors were present, emigration became ‘a problem’. The solutions proposed by the Commission were to encourage economic development in the agricultural and industrial sectors. The outflow of women to domestic service jobs in Britain should be stemmed by introducing income tax allowances to those employing resident domestic servants in Ireland. The growth of provincial cities and towns should be encouraged through industrial and administrative decentralisation and the quality of rural life should be improved through better amenities. Ryan’s view was that, if all the Commission’s recommendations were accepted, the best they

⁵¹ Ryan, ‘Some Irish Population Problems’, p.187.

would achieve would be maintenance of the status quo. His conclusion was that ‘while the standard of living that the Irish expect remains largely determined by that the English enjoy, emigration must continue’.⁵²

Although the report was not published in full until 1955, excerpts and recommendations were made public during 1954. These received considerable coverage in the press, much of which focussed on female emigration and Bishop Lucey’s Minority Report.⁵³ Government departments responded to the report but no action to restrict emigration was taken.⁵⁴ Complaints about the level of emigration and calls to alleviate this through Government action on the economy remained part of the political landscape throughout subsequent decades. These discussions have been described in detail by Mary Daly.⁵⁵ Since the main subject of this chapter is policy for Irish migrants in Britain, this will not be considered further here.

As well as calls to reduce emigration through economic development, the Government also received calls to restrict it through legal or regulatory frameworks, particularly after the requirement for travel permits issued in Ireland was removed in April 1952.⁵⁶ Concerns were expressed by organisations in England, notably the Catholic Women’s League, English

⁵² Ryan, ‘Some Irish Population Problems’, p.188.

⁵³ See for example: Report on Emigration. ‘Social Amenities Important Factor. Call for Better Rural Living Standards’, *Irish Independent*, 19 July 1954. Department of the Taoiseach, Emigration and Rural Depopulation, Commission of Inquiry, s1429A/2, NAI; and ‘Most Rev. Dr. Lucey’s Report. The Vital Need for Well-Paid Work. Restrictions on Entry to Trades Condemned’, *Irish Independent*, 27 July 1954. Department of the Taoiseach, Emigration and Rural Depopulation, Commission of Inquiry, s1429A/2, NAI.

⁵⁴ See, for example, Memorandum from the Department of Agriculture: ‘Observations on the Report of the Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems’, 3 July 1956. Department of the Taoiseach, s14249C; Memorandum from the Department of Education, 25 July 1956, s14249C; Memorandum from the Department of Finance, 5 July 1956, s14249C, NAI.

⁵⁵ Daly, *The Slow Failure*, pp.183-331.

⁵⁶ Copy letter from W.P. Fay, Department of External Affairs to Secretary, Department of Justice, 29 October 1952. Department of the Taoiseach, Irish Labour, Emigration, s11582E, NAI; NES, Economic and Social Implications of Emigration, p.58.

Catholic Rescue Societies, and the National Vigilance Association regarding the large numbers of Irish girls under the age of twenty arriving in England with no money and no employment or accommodation arranged. In some cases, employment agencies had recruited girls to posts that turned out to be non-existent. A persistent fear of organisations concerned with risks to young females was ‘the white slave trade’, as human trafficking was generally described, and the use of bogus employment offers to lure young women into prostitution or improper relationships with male employers. The correspondence from the Catholic Women’s League included cases of advertisements for domestic service in family homes, which turned out to have been placed by single males.⁵⁷ These fears were not new – organisations such as the Travellers’ Aid Society had been concerned with young women travelling away from home (not only those from Ireland) with little money and inadequate arrangements for over 70 years.⁵⁸ These young women were regarded as being in ‘moral danger’ particularly with respect to prostitution and illegitimate pregnancy. However, the organisations raising these concerns in order to press for government action did so on the basis of anecdote rather than any sustained analysis of the situation. The English agencies called upon the government to use the legal framework to restrict emigration of women under twenty-one and to use the regulatory framework to police the activities of employment agencies. The English groups also lobbied McQuaid and the Irish hierarchy who, as discussed in Chapter 1, supported their arguments with the government. During the early 1950s, the Department of External Affairs was also largely supportive

⁵⁷ See correspondence on file: Department of Foreign Affairs, Conditions of Employment of Irish Girls Working in Britain – Moral Problems, DFA/6/402/218, NAI.

⁵⁸ Richard Philips, ‘Unsexy Geographies: Heterosexuality, Respectability and the Travellers’ Aid Society’, *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 5, 2 (2006), pp.163-190

of regulation and argued for government funding for ‘hostels and welfare officers [in Britain] for young emigrants’.⁵⁹ Legislation to restrict emigration was consistently resisted by the government on the grounds that ‘the denial to individuals of the opportunity to seek a livelihood or career abroad would, in the Government’s view, be the restriction of a fundamental human right which could only be justified in circumstances of great national emergency.’⁶⁰ The emigration of minors was considered to be the responsibility of parents and guardians, not the state. Ensuring that this duty was observed was not a matter for legislation but fell ‘within the area of responsibility left by the constitution to parents and guardians themselves, and that of the ecclesiastical authorities of the denomination concerned.’⁶¹ This formulation effectively transferred responsibility from the government to the church and families themselves. This was fully in line with the principle of subsidiarity endorsed by Catholic social teaching and therefore closed discussion on the subject.

The issue of whether or not the Irish government had any responsibility to provide for its citizens in Britain first slid on to the policy agenda in 1950, when

⁵⁹ Letter from William P. Fay, Assistant Secretary, Department of External Affairs to the Secretary, Department of Justice, 29 October 1952. Department of the Taoiseach, Irish Labour, Emigration, s11582E, NAI.

⁶⁰ Letter to Bishop Staunton from the Taoiseach, 16 February 1948. Department of the Taoiseach, s15398A, NAI. On demands for regulation of employment agencies, see, for example, letter from Bishop Staunton, Joint Secretary to the, to the Taoiseach, 13 October, 1947. Department of the Taoiseach, s14997A, NAI. For concerns re agencies acting as a front for procurement see letter from D. Nyham to the Taoiseach, 6 June 1955, claiming that the ‘Servants Registry’ was a front for recruiting girls to brothels in England. Department of the Taoiseach, s11582F, NAI.

⁶⁰ See, for example, Memorandum from the Department of External Affairs on, 30 December 1947. Department of the Taoiseach, Irish Labour – Emigration, s11582B, NAI – considers causes of emigration and whether Government should use legislation to control it; correspondence with Ministry of Justice concerning possibility of regulating employment agencies and restricting recruitment advertisements aimed at minors. Department of the Taoiseach, Irish Labour Emigration, s11582E, NAI; minute to the Department of the Taoiseach from the Department of Social Welfare, 19 January, 1948. Department of the Taoiseach, s15398A, NAI.

⁶¹ Letter from the Department of External Affairs to the Secretary, Department of the Taoiseach, 13 February, 1954. Department of the Taoiseach, Irish Labour – Emigration, s11582F, NAI.

a delegation from the London Irish priests' committee visited Dublin to apprise the government of the issues facing Irish migrants in London and to seek financial support for their proposed Irish Centre which would provide hostel accommodation for newly arrived emigrants and welfare advice on employment and housing. They were granted an appointment with the Taoiseach, John Costello, and other members of the government. Whilst the response from Dublin was 'generally favourable', there was no commitment to provide funding. Indeed, Costello firstly expressed surprise that there were so many Irish people arriving in London, moving on to note that it would be difficult to offer funding since there was no budget allocated for this purpose and that the government would 'need to avoid giving the impression that [it] favoured emigration.'⁶² Although discussions appear to have continued over the next three years, eventually the London priests' committee gave up waiting and, in 1953 established an executive committee to take the project forward without securing Irish government funding.⁶³

Later in 1953, the minister for external affairs received a petition with 20,000 signatures 'demanding that the government fund an information centre in Birmingham'.⁶⁴ This, coming against a background of previous requests to contribute towards the setting up and running of hostels and information centres in other English cities prompted the minister to develop a clearer policy position for consideration by the Taoiseach. The memorandum drafted for this purpose

⁶² See: The London Irish Heritage Project, 'Meeting the needs' p.2-5 <<http://www.irishcentreheritage.org/index.php?content=mn&page=1>> (14 October 2012).

⁶³ Ibid., p.5. See discussion in Chapter 3.

⁶⁴ 'Irish Community Trust Fund', Memorandum for the Taoiseach drafted by Minister for External Affairs (undated but from position in file probably December 1953 as sent with a letter to Irish ambassador dated 17 December 1953). Department of External Affairs, Financial Assistance from Irish Government Towards Welfare of the Irish in Britain – General Policy, Ambasad Na hEireann (London), B100/19, NAI.

stated clearly that ‘no Irish Government could...see its way to make State funds available [for hostels and information centres in England]...an assumption by any Irish Government for the relief of Irish workers in England would not only create impossible demands upon the Irish Exchequer but would necessarily operate to promote rather than discourage indiscriminate emigration to England.’ It would also remove ‘any incentive to self-help’ from the Irish in England. In responding to ‘applications...for State funds for [these] purposes’ it would be pointed out that ‘no Irish Government wished the Irish people to go to England or could take responsibility for keeping them there. The Irish Government would, of course, be only too happy to look after them if they came home.’ To be effective, catering for the welfare of Irish workers in Britain would ‘have to be done by the Irish in Britain with the help and co-operation of their English friends.’⁶⁵ The language used, with its references to ‘relief’ of workers and ‘self-help’ draws on welfare policy thinking consistent with the nineteenth century Poor Laws. The memorandum did not specify who the ‘English friends’ who should help in welfare provision for the Irish were, although this might have been a reference to the Catholic church in England and other organisations making representations regarding Irish needs.⁶⁶

The minister was clear that the Irish government could not provide funding for welfare work with Irish migrants directly. He did, however, propose a national voluntary collection to be held in Ireland. The proceeds from this would be used to establish a trust fund out of which grants could be awarded

⁶⁵ ‘Irish Community Trust Fund’, draft memo for the Taoiseach, December 1953. Department of External Affairs, Financial Assistance from Irish Government Towards Welfare of the Irish in Britain – General Policy, Ambasaíd Na hEireann (London), B100/19, NAI.

⁶⁶ The National Vigilance Association repeatedly expressed their concerns regarding Irish girls, as young as 14, arriving unaccompanied and penniless at English ports, with the attendant risks of human trafficking. See, for example, copies of NVA minutes in: Department of the Taoiseach, Irish Labour – Emigration, s11582E, NAI.

‘for the purpose of furthering the work of Irish organisations in Britain concerned with social, cultural and welfare activities’. The proposal was further developed by discussion between Sean Nunan, Secretary to the Department of External Affairs, and Fred Boland, Irish Ambassador to Britain.⁶⁷ Boland stressed that the proposed trust should not provide grants or other financial assistance to individuals.⁶⁸ A formal trust deed should be drawn up in which the purposes of the trust should be clearly defined, along the lines of:

to encourage and assist organisation among Irish people in Great Britain for social, cultural, and welfare purposes, or, to assist the work of Irish organisations in Great Britain concerned with the advancement of the social, cultural and welfare interests of Irish people in that country.

It should be stressed that the trust would ‘follow the principle of helping those who help themselves’ by encouraging them to ‘set up local organisations which, once established, would become self-supporting’.⁶⁹ Funding would not be provided to start up organisations but only to assist existing ‘or projected’ organisations that could show that they had already raised some funding themselves. To encourage budgetary responsibility, funding would be given in the form of loans rather than grants. To save money, secretarial and administrative support for the trust could be provided by the Embassy. The collection to raise the initial capital for the trust could be organised by the Red Cross.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Letter from Fred Boland to Sean Nunan, 17 December 1953. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Financial Assistance Towards Welfare of the Irish in Britain - General Policy, 1959-1969, B100/19, NAI.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Letter from Fred Boland to Sean Nunan, 17 December 1953, and letter from Fred Boland to William Fay, 30 January 1954. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Financial Assistance Towards Welfare of the Irish in Britain - General Policy, 1959-1969, B100/19, NAI.

⁷⁰ Letter from Fred Boland to Sean Nunan, 17 December 1953. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Financial Assistance Towards Welfare of the Irish in Britain - General Policy, 1959-1969, B100/19, NAI.

The Taoiseach's department was generally supportive of the proposals, but suggested that Irish social and welfare groups already established in Britain should form the basis of the scheme and lead the loan programme. A committee was proposed which would include the Minister for External Affairs and a representative of the Irish Red Cross to 'examine the whole matter in detail before any definite steps are taken.' There was the question, for example, of whether 'organising collections' would be within the Red Cross remit and whether it would be more appropriate to collect funds from the Irish in Britain rather than those at home. The Taoiseach's office also, rather prudently, suggested that the phrase 'the Irish Government would of course be only too happy to look after them [Irish migrants] if they came home' be removed from the memorandum.⁷¹ The Taoiseach's view was clear that any scheme 'to assist the Irish in Britain must inevitably depend for its ultimate success on the willingness of the Irish in Britain to co-operate, and it is a virtue of the scheme as now proposed...that such co-operation will have to be seen to be forthcoming before any action is taken in this country to secure subscriptions.'⁷²

Boland considered that this approach was flawed in that it assumed that Irish social and welfare groups capable of organising fund raising, and running the resulting trust and its loan awarding programme, already existed in Britain. His view and that of his embassy staff was that, whilst Irish people in Britain should be able to provide 'any necessary welfare activities by means of voluntary effort

⁷¹ Letter to British Ambassador and Minister for External Affairs from M. O Muimhneachain, Department of the Taoiseach, 7 January 1954. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Financial Assistance Towards Welfare of the Irish in Britain - General Policy, 1959-1969, B100/19, NAI.

⁷² William Fay to Fred Boland, 20 January 1954. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Financial Assistance Towards Welfare of the Irish in Britain - General Policy, 1959-1969, B100/19, NAI.

and organisation among themselves', they were currently very far from this and there was little in the way of organised Irish welfare or other activity on which to build.⁷³ Although the Gaelic Athletic Association and the Gaelic League had active branches in some parts of the country, in other places they were very weak – unable to manage more than 'the occasional social and a St. Patrick's Day dinner'. The organisations had little finance and could not act in any representative capacity. Neither were there any that drew on a membership representative of the Irish in Britain as a whole. Many had a membership from 'the higher social strata'. The group who were least involved in existing organisations were 'those who need[ed] it most – the young boys and girls who come here as workers.' Boland concluded that the scheme as now proposed would not work because there was no pre-existing organisational structure on which to base it and creating one would take time.⁷⁴

The history of attempts to raise donations from the Irish in Britain was not an encouraging one. Boland noted that existing Irish organisations found it hard to raise funds in their own localities - 'the best Irish society in the country – the Irish Society of Portsmouth' was struggling to raise funds for 'fixed premises'. Furthermore, the dioceses and parishes in England would be unlikely to support the organisation of collections since they were occupied with 'the tremendous problem of financing the Catholic schools'. Holding collections outside church premises would need police authorisation and direct personal approaches to individuals were unlikely to achieve much success. Boland also considered that giving the authority to approve loans to the organisations that might benefit from

⁷³ Letter from Fred Boland to William Fay, 30 January 1954. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Financial Assistance Towards Welfare of the Irish in Britain - General Policy, 1959-1969, B100/19, NAI.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

them was problematic. Instead, trustees should be chosen who were not identified with membership of particular Irish bodies. This was important, Boland felt, because ‘mutual disagreement and contention is a besetting sin of Irish organisations in this country. A body of persons directly representative of individual organisations would find it very difficult in practice to reach effective decisions’. Trustees should be individuals of sufficiently high repute to ‘place them above the dissensions of rival groups’.⁷⁵ Boland’s view was that the lack of existing organisation amongst the Irish in Britain would make the scheme unworkable. Furthermore, improving on this position would require something of a culture change amongst young Irish people who were not presently part of any Irish networks. Boland considered that young people did not lack money and that if they could be encouraged to frequent local Irish organisations offering dancing and club amenities instead of ‘pouring [money] into the pockets of English dance-hall proprietors and publicans’ then there would be finance for a network of Irish social and welfare organisations.⁷⁶ This analysis overlooks the fact, demonstrated in Daly’s reports to the Irish Hierarchy (see Chapter 1) that many of the dance-hall proprietors were themselves Irish and that there was no guarantee that the young would transfer their custom to clubs linked to Irish social and welfare organisations.

During February 1954, Boland returned to Dublin and discussed the proposals with both the Taoiseach and the Minister for External Affairs.

Tentative agreement was reached for Boland to convene a small group of

⁷⁵ Fred Boland to William Fay, 30 January 1954. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Financial Assistance Towards Welfare of the Irish in Britain - General Policy, 1959-1969, B100/19, NAI.

⁷⁶ Boland to Fay, 30 January 1954. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Financial Assistance Towards Welfare of the Irish in Britain - General Policy, 1959-1969, B100/19, NAI.

‘prominent Irish people in Britain’ who would write to both the Irish government and the Catholic hierarchy promoting the trust fund proposal and suggesting a national collection.⁷⁷ A complication now arose in that the Taoiseach and the Minister for External Affairs became aware of what they understood to be a Westminster, Southwark and Brentwood diocesan decision to advance ‘the social and welfare interests of Irish people [in London] out of their own resources’. This referred to the proposed London Irish Centre, which the Irish priests committee had raised with the Taoiseach back in 1950. The government was now concerned that, although ‘the Cardinal [Griffin of Westminster] did not explain exactly what this decision meant...it sounded as if the Bishops here had decided to be independent of assistance from Ireland, if possible.’⁷⁸ In reality, Cardinal Griffin’s vagueness on ‘what this decision meant’ reflected the detached relationship of the London Bishops to the Irish priests committee and their vague understanding proposal for the Irish Centre.

To clarify the English hierarchy’s position, Boland met with Cardinal Griffin in April 1954. He was reassured that Griffin supported the Irish government scheme and that it would not cut across that of the London bishops to establish a London Irish Centre. Griffin supported both the principal that the Irish in Britain should support their own welfare activities out of their own pockets and that the proposed fund would be used to help ‘launch schemes which promised to be self-supporting once established’.⁷⁹ Having ascertained that the Irish scheme would not cut across that supported by the London bishops, Boland

⁷⁷ Letter from Frank Boland to William Fay, 30 March 1954. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Financial Assistance Towards Welfare of the Irish in Britain - General Policy, 1959-1969, B100/19, NAI.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

sought Fay's agreement to progressing work on the trust fund.⁸⁰ No response, or further correspondence on this issue is contained in the file, and the scheme did not progress beyond this point. In June 1954, Boland wrote to Fay describing the twenty-first anniversary celebrations for the Legion of Mary in Britain and the plans of its founder, Frank Duff, for work with the Irish in Britain. He noted that this 'programme of action' would 'touch the plans we had in mind at several points'.⁸¹ Since the original proposals were not progressed, it may be that Boland and Fay felt that matters could now be left in the hands of the church and the Legion.

Requests for funding from groups in England continued to be received. In 1959, teleprinter messages were exchanged between the Irish government and the ambassador in response to a request to contribute to the Manchester Irish Association's plan to set up a 'hostel for young Irish girls' and towards the running costs of an advice bureau for immigrants. The Department of External Affairs reminded the ambassador that it was 'settled policy' that Irish public funds should not be called upon to contribute to Irish organisations in Britain. The Irish in Britain were 'at least as well off as the people at home' and should, therefore, fund their own 'activities, welfare or otherwise'. Further, as there were many Irish organisations 'of one sort or another' in Britain, if a contribution was given to one 'all the others would start clamouring for assistance and there would be no end to the demand on public funds.' The advice given was either not to reply or to reply 'welcoming the initiative but

⁸⁰ Letter from Fred Boland to William Fay, 10 May 1954. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Financial Assistance Towards Welfare of the Irish in Britain - General Policy, 1959-1969, B100/19, NAI.

⁸¹ Letter from Fred Boland to William Fay, 9 June 1954. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Financial Assistance Towards Welfare of the Irish in Britain - General Policy, 1959-1969, B100/19, NAI.

stating that no funds are available [and] noting the impossibility of the Irish government supporting all such activities in England.’⁸² The policy position therefore remained as it had prior to the correspondence of 1954.

The Irish Embassy was not pro-active in assessing or responding to the needs of Irish migrants over the period. This is not surprising given the policy position described above and the lack of financial resources. Nevertheless, the Embassy files illustrates the ways in Irish people considering migrating to England perceived the role of the Embassy and it also provides evidence of interaction with organisations and groups in England concerned with the Irish. Some examples of this will now be discussed. A file covering the period 1950-71 contains letters written to the Embassy from those in Ireland seeking advice on employment in Britain. The authors clearly hoped that the Embassy could arrange employment and accommodation for them. In 1952, the Ambassador wrote to the Secretary at the Department of External Affairs explaining what was happening and noting that ‘the Embassy is not in a position to offer an opinion as to the prospects of obtaining either accommodation or employment in London as these must be a matter for the personal initiative of individuals.’⁸³ Although not able to provide advice on an individual basis, the Embassy did maintain information on London department stores, hop picking and fruit harvesting working holidays and the British civil service and sent this out in response to queries. It appears that these covered the most popular areas of enquiry from Irish people seeking permanent or temporary work in Britain. A

⁸² Teleprinter correspondence between the Irish Embassy, London and the Department of External Affairs, Dublin, March 1959. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Financial Assistance Towards Welfare of the Irish in Britain - General Policy, 1959-1969, B100/19, NAI.

⁸³ Letter from Irish Ambassador to the Secretary at the Department of External Affairs, 6 October 1952. Department of External Affairs – Embassies – London, Employment in Britain Queries Permanent and Temporary, Irish National Archive, B101/6, NAI.

large number of requests were received from Irish university students seeking work for the summer vacation.⁸⁴ Occasionally, a letter elicited a more personal response, particularly where the Ambassador was concerned that migration would be unwise. In 1954, Boland received a letter from a thirty-four year old married man with three children who hoped to secure work in England as a solicitors' clerk. Boland advised him against this on the grounds that 'there is a large pool of cheap female school leaving age labour who can do this [work with the result that the enquirer] would not command a family wage or get any recognition for [his] ten years' experience.'⁸⁵

Enquiries sometimes came from those in Ireland with strong religious commitments wishing to work in England to support their religiously weaker compatriots. For example, in 1955 Boland exchanged correspondence with a member of the Legion of Mary who had been working for the Legion full-time in Dublin but also had training in hotel and catering work. This woman wanted to work alongside young Irish girls in England because she thought 'they are earning the reputation for themselves of being deceitful, badly mannered and most careless about their religious duties. [She was] confident that if [she] could meet girls of this type [she] perhaps may be able to influence them for good by her kindness and example.' However, she was finding it difficult to identify 'work places with large numbers of Irish girls' and hoped the Ambassador could help. Her request was supported by a letter from Father Patrick Carroll, Provincial of the Holy Ghost Fathers at the Missionary College, Kimmage. Father Carroll also congratulated the Ambassador on 'the excellent impression

⁸⁴ Correspondence on file at: Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Employment in Britain Queries Permanent and Temporary, B101/6, NAI.

⁸⁵ Letter from Ambassador to DM, 11 November 1954. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Employment in Britain Queries Permanent and Temporary, B101/6, NAI.

you have made everywhere in England, especially in the Catholic circles’.

Boland responded by offering to meet her to discuss her plans but there is no record of whether such a meeting took place.⁸⁶ His willingness to extend help in this case was probably related to the involvement of the Holy Ghost Provincial.

Requests were also received regarding individuals who were particularly disadvantaged in the Irish labour market due, for example, to disability. A religious sister wrote to Boland in 1955 to enquire whether her disabled brother might find better job prospects in England. Boland responded by sending a copy of the Ministry of Labour leaflet on ‘The Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944’ and suggesting that further advice might be obtained from the Irish Centre in Camden or the relevant county association in London.⁸⁷ There is a suggestion here that, informally at least, Ireland looked to Britain to make up for gaps in provision for groups with particular needs, such as the disabled. Kevin O’Connor argues that the Government ‘condoned ...the export of [the] mentally ill to Britain’ although no evidence for this was found in the Government files.⁸⁸

Correspondence with the President of University College, Cork in 1958 illustrates the lack of good quantitative or qualitative data on Irish employment in Britain. The college president wrote to the Ambassador for advice on setting up a formal placement scheme for Cork engineering graduates with British firms who were large employers of Irish labour.⁸⁹ The Ambassador was only able to reply in general and anecdotal terms confirming that recruitment occurred via

⁸⁶ Correspondence from Miss Miriam Davitt and Father Carroll to the Ambassador, 27 August 1955. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Employment in Britain Queries Permanent and Temporary, B101/6, NAI.

⁸⁷ Correspondence with Sr Anthony, 23 November 1955. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Employment in Britain Queries Permanent and Temporary, B101/6, NAI.

⁸⁸ Kevin O’Connor, *The Irish in Britain* (Dublin, 1974), p.116.

⁸⁹ Letter from H. St.J. Atkins, President of University College, Cork to the Irish Ambassador, 2 April 1958. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Employment in Britain Queries Permanent and Temporary, B101/6, NAI.

newspaper advertisements or personal contacts, that the main areas of settlement were London, the Midlands, the North East and Scotland (information which failed to distinguish the current from the nineteenth-century pattern of settlement) and that certain trades and industries (construction, the motor industry, public transport and catering) attracted the majority of Irish workers. This general picture concentrated on manual work rather than Irish professional or managerial staff. The Ambassador enclosed a list of major companies and suggested that the president might contact them direct to 'discuss the question of employing Irish university graduates as well.'⁹⁰ The president subsequently sent a copy of the circular letter he had drafted to go to British employers of Irish labour. This letter indicates, that in seeking placements for graduates, he was not solely looking to provide individuals with career opportunities: 'the thought occurred to me that it might be a good thing for the emigrants and for your firm if some Irish graduates, who would interest themselves in the social welfare of the workers, were on your staff.'⁹¹ Quite how such a scheme might have been put into practice or whether it received a favourable response from the British companies is not recorded.

As late as 1968, the Embassy showed caution in responding to queries regarding employment from females, reflecting the long-standing concerns about the risks to moral welfare to which female migrants were exposed. A request for a list of employment agencies from a woman in Mallow caused the Ambassador to write to the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs.

⁹⁰ Letter from the Irish Ambassador to H. St.J. Atkins, 29 April 1958. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Employment in Britain queries Permanent and Temporary, B101/6, NAI.

⁹¹ Copy of a circular letter from H.St.J. Atkins for distribution to British firms employing Irish workers, April 1958. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Employment in Britain Queries Permanent and Temporary, B101/6, NAI.

The Ambassador was concerned that ‘to comply with this request, even by furnishing the name of the Marian Employment Agency Ltd., [our] action in doing so could be open to criticism, particularly as the age of the enquirer is not known to us.’ It was suggested that the Department of External Affairs might direct her to the Catholic Emigration Bureau in Cork instead.⁹²

The Embassy did not see it as appropriate to take a proactive role in migrant welfare issues. It did respond to invitations to support community initiatives, either directed at the Irish specifically or at immigrants more generally, by sending Embassy staff to meetings or fund raising functions to show support. The Embassy sent an observer to the inaugural conference for the Camden Committee for Community Relations in 1965 and to several subsequent Annual General Meetings. The Committee had the objective of facilitating ‘the gradual evolution of a multi-racial society in the area’. It received a council grant to support community projects and was part of a national network of similar committees.⁹³ Whilst the conference, and the subsequent committee, was attended by a number of Irish priests, the Embassy was concerned that no lay Irish organisations were represented. Although the Irish Counties Association was affiliated and had nominated a representative, there is no record that they attended or were active in any of the resulting projects. It was noted repeatedly at the Annual General Meetings that no problems arose from the Irish in the area who were ‘fully accepted and well-organised’. The Cypriots, West Indians,

⁹² Letter from Maria O’Connell to Irish Ambassador, 23 August 1968 and subsequent letter from Ambassador to Secretary at the Department of External Affairs. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Employment in Britain Queries Permanent and Temporary, B101/6, NAI. The Marian Employment Agency had been established in 1965 by the Oblate Fathers and its details were regularly given out to enquirers.

⁹³ P.J.G. Keating, Report on Camden Conference on Immigration, 21 June 1965. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Camden Committee for Community Relations, 1965-1969, B100/20, NAI.

Pakistanis and Nigerians, however, had ‘difficulties and grievances’ especially regarding housing, policing and access to welfare benefits and services.⁹⁴ The Embassy continued to attend the annual meetings ‘more to preserve our rights and to prevent attacks on our privileges than for any active contribution we can make or receive.’⁹⁵ There were occasions when the Embassy needed to correct misunderstandings – such as the incorrect inclusion of the Irish delegates within the ‘Commonwealth’ group.⁹⁶ Although the Embassy was generally supportive of the CCCR’s objectives, their assessment was that it was not directly relevant to Irish issues, needs or interests. Although papers continued to be received until 1969, the Embassy does not appear to have sent an observer to the AGM after 1967. The low level of attendance and engagement from Irish organisations in Camden suggests that they may not have seen the CCCR as relevant to their needs either.

The Ambassador was happy to support Irish initiatives in London by attending fundraising functions for suitable organisations, as Ambassador Molloy did in support of the Marian Employment Agency in 1966 and 1967.⁹⁷ The Marian Employment Agency (discussed in detail in chapter 2) was established by the Oblate Fathers under the directorship of Father Eamon Casey, a Limerick priest. Molloy’s response to the Marian Employment Agency was more supportive than that of previous ambassadors to earlier approaches to support initiatives for migrants. He congratulated the agency on its

⁹⁴ Annual General Meeting of the Camden Committee for Community Relations Minutes, 7 July 1966. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Camden Committee for Community Relations, 1965-1969, B100/20, NAI; Annual General Meeting of the Camden Committee for Community Relations Minutes, 6 July 1967. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Camden Committee for Community Relations, 1965-1969, B100/20, NAI.

⁹⁵ Keating, Report on the Camden Conference, June 1965, B100/20, NAI.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Letters of acceptance of invitations to attend receptions and concerts in aid of the Marian Employment Agency, 12 September 1966 and 17 March 1967. Department of External Affairs, Embassies – London, Marian Employment Agency, NW6, B101/79, NAI.

establishment adding that 'the Embassy would be glad to assist the agency in its work wherever possible.'⁹⁸ In 1967 Molloy sent a donation of 5 guineas as well as attending a fund raising concert.⁹⁹ The Marian Employment Agency seems to have been given special status by the Embassy as being 'conducted under reputable and responsible auspices'.¹⁰⁰ After its inception, only its details were given to individuals enquiring about employment opportunities through the Embassy.¹⁰¹

In 1969, the government finally changed its policy of not providing public funds for emigrant welfare. A small fund, £10,000, was offered to support such activities. The response of the Irish hierarchy was that it was too little, too late and showed no appreciation of the extensive work that had been and was continuing to be carried out under the auspices of the hierarchy with no external funding. The proposal does not appear to have been developed further at that time.¹⁰²

Conclusion

The period 1940 to 1972 was one of very different economic conditions in Great Britain and Ireland. For the former it was a period of high demand for labour, initially for the expanding war industries and subsequently for post-war industrial growth. Between 1942 and 1970, the official UK unemployment rate

⁹⁸ Letter from T.J.G. Molloy, Ambassador, to P.J. Casey, Manager of the Marian Employment Agency, 2nd April 1965. Department of External Affairs, Embassies – London, Marian Employment Agency, NW6, B101/79, NAI.

⁹⁹ Letter from T.J.G. Molloy to Eamon Casey, 17 March 1967. Department of External Affairs, Embassies – London, Marian Employment Agency, NW6, B101/79, NAI.

¹⁰⁰ Letter from First Secretary to Kieran Kehoe, 18 November 1965. Department of External Affairs, Embassies – London, Employment in Britain Queries Permanent and Temporary, B101/6, NAI.

¹⁰¹ See correspondence from individuals enquiring about employment on file B101/6, NAI.

¹⁰² Notes of a meeting between Msg Barrett and HJA Gray of the CSWB and officials of the Department of Labour to discuss proposals for government support to emigrants, 27 May 1969. McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XIX, Box 3, DDA.

varied between 0.7 per cent and 2.6 per cent, with an average annual rate under 2 per cent, rates which would be regarded as 'full employment' by many economists.¹⁰³ The British economy could effectively absorb anyone willing to work including the semi- and unskilled. The British government saw Ireland as a ready source of labour that was easier to assimilate than either Eastern European workers or 'coloured' Commonwealth immigrants. Government policy was directed towards ensuring that this source of labour was not restricted in any way. This was achieved through the 1948 British Nationality Act, which effectively gave Irish citizens in Britain equal status to British citizens. The 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act gave the Home Secretary the ability to deport Irish citizens convicted of serious offences. It was recognised that it would be impossible to prevent deportees from re-entering the United Kingdom but no action was taken to introduce border checks to address this because free entry for the majority was considered to be more important than the ability to identify a small number of returning deportees. Having extended the benefits of citizenship to Irish citizens the government did not consider any further policy for the reception, integration or other support of Irish migrants to be required. Neither do the records indicate that the government received any demands for policy action in relation to them.

Whereas Britain saw an average annual growth in gross domestic product of 2.1 per cent between 1950 and 1958, the rate for Ireland was a meagre 0.9 per cent due largely to the poor economic policies pursued by the Irish

¹⁰³ Robert Price and George Sayers Bain, 'The Labour Force', in A. H. Halsey (ed.), *British Social Trends Since 1900: A Guide to the Changing Social Structure of Britain* (London, 1988), pp.173-177.

government.¹⁰⁴ The Irish economy could not utilise the available labour and the Irish government could not afford to support surplus labour through social welfare benefits. Emigration therefore had many attractions for the government, which, while it was careful not to be seen to encourage it, certainly did not wish to discourage it either. Over the period 1940-1972, the Irish government received repeated calls from the Irish and English Catholic Hierarchies, voluntary organisations and individuals concerned with the welfare of Irish migrants in Britain. These took the form of requests to intervene through legislation to regulate employment agencies recruiting in Ireland and/or to restrict emigration, particularly that of young women travelling alone; and requests to contribute funding towards welfare initiatives for the Irish in Britain. Government policy towards the Irish in Britain was formulated in response to those demands and was, therefore, reactive rather than proactive. Policy was based on the principle that, above all, the government could not be seen in any way to be encouraging or condoning emigration. Beyond that, the government had limited resources and Irish emigrants who, as a group were as well off, if not better off, than those at home, could not have any priority for these. Initiatives to support the social or welfare needs of the Irish in Britain should come from within the emigrant group themselves and to provide funding for this would risk suppressing their own local initiative and desire to support themselves. The government could have added that Irish people in Britain enjoyed entitlement to a wider range of health and social welfare benefits than did their compatriots at home. Richard Titmus argued that the Irish Government followed an implicit policy of 'export[ing] a proportion of its public assistance

¹⁰⁴ Cormac O'Grada, 'The Irish Economy Half a Century Ago', UCD Centre for Economic Research, Working Paper Series, WP08/18, August 2008, pp.2-3 [consulted at: <http://www.ucd.ie/economics/research/papers/2008/WP08.18.pdf> (3 September 2012)].

cases...to Britain, since the total of 'Supplementary Benefits and Allowances' to which they (and their 'large families') were entitled in Britain were considerably greater than the earnings for unskilled workers in Ireland.¹⁰⁵ There is no evidence in the government files to show that this, or the 'export' of the mentally ill alleged by O'Connor (see introduction) was acknowledged as either an objective or side-effect of emigration.

Irish government policy on emigration and emigrant welfare was developed as a result of discussion between the Taoiseach's department and the department of external affairs, with advice from the Irish Ambassador to Britain. There does not appear to have been any wider consultation with interested parties in either Ireland or Britain and it was not formally promulgated as a 'policy statement'. Nevertheless, it is clearly stated in government files relating to migrant affairs and was consistently applied, not surprisingly since the lack of any financial resources left little leeway for action. Given this background, it is not surprising that neither the government nor its embassy seem to have attempted to assess the position of Irish migrants in Britain or their needs. This is in contrast to the Irish and English hierarchies for whom, or with whose co-operation, a number of surveys or other needs assessments were made over the period. As a result, the construction of Irish migrants in Britain and their needs, by the government and its departments remained broad and vague. They accepted that migrants may have had unspecified social, cultural and welfare needs but considered that the assessment of these, and the organisation and funding of proposals to address them should be the responsibility of the migrants themselves.

¹⁰⁵ Titmuss, *Social Policy*, p.19.

The government took the view that those amongst the Irish emigrants with the skills and ability to co-ordinate organisations to help those of their compatriots with social or welfare problems should have been doing so and they expressed their disappointment that this was not the case. In this, the Irish appear to differ from other migrant groups amongst whom there were greater levels of such organisation. An obvious comparison is with the influx of East European Jews to London's East End between 1880 and 1914. The new migrants themselves organised complex social and voluntary organisations (the *chevroth*) that acted as 'social, spiritual and cultural shock absorber[s]'. In addition, established Anglo-Jewry, alarmed at the political implications of mass immigration, developed a comprehensive strategy of 'Anglicization' for the newly arrived, based on a 'dense and overlapping network of Anglo-Jewish communal institutions'.¹⁰⁶ O'Connor argues that the middle-class professional Irish in Britain gave no lead on such activities because they were 'fearful of their delicate (and imagined) status.'¹⁰⁷ This may be unfair. The Irish professional middle-class may not have seen themselves as having any particular link to or responsibility for vulnerable young Irish migrants, simply because they were fellow Irish. The vast majority of new migrants managed at least tolerably well in terms of gaining employment and they certainly did not pose any 'political' threat to others of Irish extraction in the way that the East European Jews did to settled Anglo-Jewry in the early twentieth century.

The inaction of the Irish government in migrant affairs has to be seen in the context of the way in which the Irish state functioned in terms of welfare

¹⁰⁶ David Englander, 'Jewish East London, 1850-1950', in W.T.R Pryce (ed), *Studying Family and Community History: Volume 2, From Family History to Community History* (Cambridge, 1994), pp.198-200.

¹⁰⁷ O'Connor, *The Irish in Britain*, p.118.

provision. Whilst in Britain this was a period in which both welfare funding and provision were becoming increasingly concentrated under state control, this was not the case in Ireland. The Irish bishops were fundamentally opposed to any kind of state intervention in health care or welfare provision. This was in line with Catholic social teaching on subsidiarity, which holds that nothing should be done by a larger and more complex organisation which can be done by a smaller or simpler body. This principle was seen as a bulwark against state encroachment on areas outside its domain such as responsibility for personal and family life whereas centralisation and state control was seen as inevitably leading to socialism and increasing state control of all aspects of life.¹⁰⁸ In practice, in Ireland, the Catholic Hierarchy took the lead on matters of social policy and welfare. The government's apparent failure to lead any work in respect of migrants in Britain has to be seen against this context. It would also explain why the government appears to have effectively withdrawn from any further consideration of formal policy or legislation once they became aware of the Irish bishops' proposals for work with migrants in 1954. The tendency of Catholic bodies to look to the government for legislation as the proper contribution of the state to the problem would also be in keeping with the principle of subsidiarity, since legislative solutions required government action whereas the organisation of welfare would lie outside the state's remit.

The lack of engagement of the Irish with community initiatives for 'racial integration' such as that in Camden suggests that they may not have felt this had anything to offer them. The interpretation placed on this by the Embassy was that the Irish were well integrated and therefore not experiencing the difficulties

¹⁰⁸ See David A Bosnich, 'The Principle of Subsidiarity', *Religion and Liberty*, 6, 4 (1996), pp.9-10; Fuller, *Irish Catholicism since 1950*, p.67.

regarding housing, social welfare and police behaviour of which other groups complained. Given the description of the level of organisation of the Irish, as Irish, noted by Boland in the 1950s, it is interesting that they are described as 'well-organised' in the late 1960s. It is not clear whether this was intended to indicate that they had by then established formal organisational structures for social, cultural and welfare activities or whether it meant that individuals and families were well integrated and therefore able to negotiate complex interactions with the state and its agencies (housing, schools, health, police, etc) without external help. The mayor of Camden was Irish-born, and this is in line with observations elsewhere that the Irish had little problem functioning within wider civil society, becoming active within mainstream politics rather than through specific Irish interest activism. Where Irish groups were represented, this was still largely by priests. Given the fact that Irish people clearly were politically active, and able to obtain election to office, this must raise the question of the lack of lay leadership in these specifically Irish organisations. This requires further elucidation but could have been either because the religious saw it as their role and were unwilling to give ground to lay leaders or because those with leadership capabilities saw mainstream political activities as a more rewarding outlet.

The government files provide evidence of the ways in which migrants in Britain were brought to the attention of the Irish government and its departments, the ways in which they conceptualised these and the ways in which they responded. The Embassy files are particularly useful as they represent an interface between the two countries and, in receiving many enquiries from migrants and intending migrants, provide a more direct perspective on migrant

issues. Until 1969, and the offer of £10,000 to support work with migrants, the approach was completely reactive and, apart from ‘moral support’, provision of basic information and small personal donations, largely negative. This was consistent with a policy position that funding work with or for migrants could not be a priority for public spending. It was not until 1984 that the Irish government established the Dion Committee with a clear mandate, and funding, to support welfare activities for the Irish in Britain.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, Dion Committee – Irish Government’s Advisory Committee on Emigrant Welfare, Strategic Plan, 2007, Department of Foreign Affairs, 2007 [consulted at: <http://www.dfa.ie/uploads/documents/Irish%20Communities%20Abroad/dion%20english%20text.pdf> (14 October 2012)]. This committee is now known as the Emigrant Services Advisory Committee. It is part of a wider Emigrant Support Programme covering diaspora communities across the world. Its main focus is to provide funding to support organizations providing welfare information to the Irish abroad, particularly the vulnerable and marginalised. In 2009, £7.4 million of grant funding was provided to organisations in Britain. See Department of Foreign Affairs – Emigrant Support Programme, available on-line at <http://www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=293> (14 October 2012).

Chapter 5: Three perspectives on Irish migrant needs and services to meet them: the wider policy arena

Introduction

Previous chapters have described the ways in which issues raised by large scale migration from Ireland to England were brought to the attention of the English and Irish hierarchies and governments; the ways in which these bodies assessed the nature of the issues; the calls to develop policy and provision which were either made to or by them; and the responses that resulted. However, concerns about migration policy, or Irish migrant needs and how they should be addressed were not the exclusive preserve of the hierarchies or governments. This chapter considers three reports assessing the needs of Irish migrants and responses to them, written between the mid-1950s to mid-1960s, by different organisations or individuals with different perspectives and for different purposes. The first is a report written by Monsignor Cecil Barrett, Director of the Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, for the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) conference in 1955.¹ Barratt's report presents the official Irish hierarchy assessment of Irish migrant need and an account of the activities of the Irish bishops to meet it. The second report, produced in 1960, was also for the ICMC but in this case was commissioned by the ICMC secretary from the Newman Demographic Survey, a group of Catholic social scientists, who belonged to the Newman Association.² Their report presents the assessment and

¹ Monsignor Cecil Barrett, Report on the Extent, Nature and Circumstances of Emigration from Ireland and the Work of the Catholic Social Welfare Bureau (Emigrants' Section), Dublin for Irish Catholic Migrants, prepared for the International Catholic Migration Congress, 1954. McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, Emigrants Section, International Catholic Migration Congress, AB8/B/XIX, DDA..

² Until 2012, the Newman Demographic Survey report, lead author A.E.C.W. Spencer, existed only in draft form. The present author has seen two drafts – neither of which has a formal title

recommendations of a group of English observers with no involvement in the provision of services for the Irish in Britain. It is also of interest for the response it elicited from the Irish hierarchy, through Barratt and McQuaid, which resulted in its being withdrawn from the ICMC conference, and provides insight into the working relationship between the English and Irish hierarchies. The third report was written in 1963 by an independent sociologist, Richard Hauser.³ His assessment of Irish migrants and their needs was a by-product of work he had done for the British Home Office with various vulnerable groups within which he had noted a large proportion of Irish people. He sought to engage the Irish Association of Social Workers and the Irish hierarchy (through McQuaid and Barrett) in addressing these issues. McQuaid and Barrett's response to Hauser and the Irish Association of Social Workers provides insight into the extent to which McQuaid saw migrant needs and services to meet them as falling solely within the purview of the church and illustrates an unwillingness to work with outside organisations.

International Context to Post-War Migration

The years after the Second World War saw a rising interest in the management of migration resulting initially from the need for internationally co-ordinated action to resettle the one to two million people displaced from their homelands

page. The copy held in the DDA consists of loose-leaf typescript sheets and has a paper wrapper with the handwritten title 'Report of Newman Demographic Survey on Irish Emigration to Britain'. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Newman Demographic Survey, AB8/B/XIX, DDA. Another draft (marked Library Copy B, NDS/60/2) held by A.E.C.W. Spencer, was kindly lent by him to the present author. The report has now been published by the Irish Manuscripts Commission as: A.E.C.W. Spencer (ed. Mary E. Daly), *Arrangements for the Integration of Irish Immigrants in England and Wales* (Dublin, 2012). Page numbers refer to the published edition.

³ Richard Hauser, 'Hypothesis of Preliminary Action Research for the Irish Problem', Centre for Group Studies, London, 1963 (typewritten document), McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Richard Hauser, AB8/B/XIX/17g, DDA.

as a direct result of the war.⁴ During the 1950s to 1960s expanding industrialising economies, such as Canada and Australia, sought to attract migrants from Southern European countries with static agricultural economies. During the period 1946-1965, five million Italians (approximately one in four) emigrated for destinations including Western Europe, the United States and Australia.⁵ Between 1954 and 1970, over one million Greeks left for similar destinations.⁶ This compares with net emigration of around 800,000 people from Ireland between 1940 and 1972.⁷ Increasing interest in, and recognition of the need for, co-ordinated policy to manage these shifts of population were reflected in the establishment, in 1951, of both secular and Catholic international organisations to share experience and propose solutions. The secular organisation was the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe, the initial remit of which was to support the logistics of mass population shift through the identification of countries for resettlement of displaced persons. PICMME went on to broaden its remit to include wider policy issues relating to the economic, social and welfare consequences of migration for both sending and receiving countries. It was

⁴ *Quelques faits relatifs au probleme des expulses et refugies allemande*, Le Ministere Federal des Expulses, Refugies et Sinistres de Guerre (Bonn, 1966); Church World Service, *DPs are People*, (New York, 1948); 'International: Lebensraum', *Time Magazine*, 13 August, 1945 [consulted at: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,792263,00.html> (19 September 2012)].

⁵ Daniela Del Boca and Alessandra Ventorini, 'Italian Migration', Discussion Paper No. 938, November 2003, Institute for the Study of Labour (IZA). The population of Italy in 1950 was 47 million.

⁶ Charalambos Kasimis and Chryssa Kassimi, 'Greece: A History of Migration', Country Profiles, Migration Information Source, Migration Policy Institute, June 2004 [consulted at: <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Profiles/display.cfm?ID=228> (3 February 2012)]. The population of Greece in 1950 was 7.5 million.

⁷ NESAC, Table 2.5: Annual Estimates of Net Migration 1926-1987, *The Economic and Social Implications of Emigration*, p.55. The population of Ireland in 1951 was 3 million.

renamed the Intergovernmental Committee on European Migration (ICEM) in 1952.⁸

The International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) was founded by German, Italian and American laity and clergy who were concerned at the implications of forced mass migration after the end of the war. Catholic interest in migration was endorsed by the publication of a Papal Encyclical, *Exsul Familia*, by Pope Pius XII in 1952.⁹ In *Exsul Familia*, Pius XII reviewed the responses the Church had made to economic migration since the nineteenth century and praised the efforts of Bishops to support migrants by sending priests of their own nationality to serve them. The Catholic Church endorsed the 'right of people to migrate' and saw migration as the means of achieving a 'more favourable distribution of men on the earth's surface'. Active co-operation between sending and receiving countries was advocated as the best means of increasing 'the welfare of man and the progress of human culture'.¹⁰

Responsibility for oversight of religious assistance provided to migrants sat with the Consistorial Congregation whilst the provision of assistance was through existing structures in each country, including the dioceses and parishes. The type of assistance was not prescribed but intended to reflect the needs of each country. The pope endorsed the ICMC as the co-ordinating body and recommended that organisations providing support for migrants in individual countries should be authorised by the relevant national hierarchy and affiliated with the ICMC. The ICMC was a voluntary body and its members consisted of

⁸ The ICEM was subsequently renamed 'International Organisation for Migration' (IOM) to reflect its increasingly global remit in 1989. A brief history of the IOM is available on-line at: <<http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/about-iom/history/lang/en>> (6 September 2012).

⁹ *Exsul Familia Nazarethana*, Apostolic Constitution of Pope Pius XII, dated 1 August, 1952, available on line at: <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius12/p12exsul.htm> (accessed 25 May 2009).

¹⁰ Ibid.

representatives of national Bishops' Conferences from countries concerned with migration or refugee issues. It held regular international congresses to discuss case studies, debate matters of policy and formulate resolutions to guide further work or best practice.¹¹ McQuaid designated the Director of the Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, Monsignor Cecil Barrett, as the Irish Bishops' representative and affiliated the Bureau as an institute with a national mandate from the hierarchy.

CSWB Report to the ICMC – Irish migrants as the Irish hierarchy saw, and wished others to see, them

Barrett submitted a report of the work undertaken by the CSWB on behalf of the Irish bishops to the ICMC conference held in Breda in 1954. The report aimed to evaluate the work done for Irish Catholic emigrants by the Irish church and to 'judge how far that work in its ultimate development can be expected to play a successful part in fulfilling the church's requirements in relation to the emigrant so far as Ireland is concerned'. Barrett was at pains to demonstrate to the ICMC that there were 'various special aspects of emigration from Ireland which distinguish [it] from the general problem of the welfare of European emigrants'. In other words, he wished to establish that much of the ICMC's standard approach to migration policy, which was based on resettlement of displaced persons or long-distance economic migration, was inappropriate to the Irish situation. To demonstrate this, Barrett's report presented a statistical analysis of socio-demographic data and trends, a discussion of the particular features of

¹¹ Ibid., and *Statement on Christian Principles in Migration: Resolutions of the International Catholic Migration Congress, Breda, September 11-17 1954* (Geneva, 1954). McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrant Section, International Catholic Migration Congress: Breda, AB8/B/XIX/22, DDA.

Irish emigration from ‘a Catholic-social viewpoint’ and a discussion of the work of the Catholic Social Welfare Bureau for both emigrants and immigrants.¹²

Barrett drew on published census data to demonstrate that the demographic background to Irish emigration, unlike that of other European countries, was one of continued population decline from 1841 to 1931, followed by two decades of population stasis at a level of just under 3 million. Likewise, competition for productive agricultural land was not a driver since Ireland had, probably, the lowest population density per square mile of agricultural land in Europe. Given this background, Barrett argued that circumstances ‘did not impel either State or church authorities to sponsor an organised emigration scheme’. Migration was, therefore, a matter of personal choice and the right of individuals to make such decisions should not be questioned.¹³ The main destination of Irish migrants was mainland Britain, with only small flows to other countries. Barrett noted that the number of Irish born persons enumerated in British censuses had been growing since 1931 and, at the 1951 census, stood at around 750,000 – a higher figure than that for Irish-born persons in the USA. Emigration of women exceeded that of men, with a ratio for the period 1946-51 of 1,365 women to 1,000 men across all destinations, with a 50 per cent excess of women over men amongst emigrants to Britain. Two thirds of male emigrants were under 30 years old, with 12.5 per cent under 20. Sixty-eight percent of women were under 25, and 31 per cent were under 20. The 1946 Census statistics on religion in Ireland showed that over 94 per cent of the population was Catholic and

¹² Cecil Barrett, Report on Irish Migration for the ICMC conference, Breda, 1954. DDA, McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrant Section, International Catholic Migration Congress: Breda, AB8/B/XIX/22, DDA.

¹³ Barrett, Report on Irish Migration for the ICMC, Breda, Part I – The Extent and General Nature of Emigration from Ireland. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrant Section, International Catholic Migration Congress: Breda, AB8/B/XIX/22, DDA.

Barrett considered that this was likely to be an indication of the religion of migrants. The pattern and extent of migration was expected to continue, with a possible increase in emigration ‘in the present decade’ reflecting an increase in birth rate seen from 1942 onwards.¹⁴

The major risks of migration to Britain were to faith and morals. Seeking to address these risks through preparation courses before departure was impractical. For many migrants, the decision to go to Britain was ‘spontaneous’ and needed little prior planning, unlike a move to, for example, Australia. Preparation courses were unlikely to attract interest because ‘the Irish temperament is allergic to regimentation in any form and [the migrant could not be convinced] that he stood in need of pre-emigration training’. This clearly established Barratt’s argument that one of the core recommendations of the ICMC, that preparation courses should be provided to intending emigrants, was inappropriate to the Irish situation.

The majority of migrants settled in urban areas of Britain and their ‘absorption’ was facilitated by the lack of language problems and the fact that ‘the pattern of material life (as distinct from a philosophy of life) ...is ...similar’. Catholic parishes were already established throughout Britain and many priests who were Irish by birth or descent were serving in them. Given this background, Barrett argued that Irish migration to Britain had more in common with internal migration within a country than it did with emigration to a foreign land. This argument was strengthened by setting migration to Britain in the context of the high levels of rural to urban migration within Ireland. However, he acknowledged that the situation should not be oversimplified since there were

¹⁴ Ibid., Part I, B – The Extent and Nature of Irish Emigration. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrant Section, International Catholic Migration Congress: Breda, AB8/B/XIX/22, DDA.

‘psychological and political’ factors to be taken into account in relation to migration to Britain. Like so many observers of the Irish in Britain, Barrett argued that the ‘common, if somewhat inexplicable, facility for developing an inferiority complex’, contributed to the problems experienced by migrants. It heightened the sense of ‘estrangement and loneliness’ often experienced by new migrants, whose young age and single status meant that they did not easily make social links with established migrant families. At best, this could lead to ‘social drifting’. At worst, the migrant would make deliberate attempts to conform to the norms of their new society - including cessation of religious practice. There were additional factors that facilitated this drift from religious practice. The housing shortage in Britain meant that married men were often obliged to leave their families in Ireland. Poor quality lodging accommodation for young single migrants meant that there was ‘an incentive to spend leisure hours in other, and not always uplifting, surroundings’. The lack of statistics to demonstrate how many migrants moved permanently and how many eventually returned home was noted but it was concluded that ‘the facility to return home is a useful safeguard against unsuccessful emigration’. Barrett’s conclusion was that since Catholicism was the defining characteristic of the Irish migrant, their welfare needs could best be met through the ‘normal parochial structures’ in both countries and that this could be achieved by close liaison between the respective ‘parochial authorities’.¹⁵ There followed a description of the work of the CSWB in passing migrant details to parishes at their intended destination. Barrett acknowledged that the number of intending emigrants whose details were passed to the bureau was ‘only a small proportion of the total emigrant

¹⁵ Barrett, Report on Irish Migration for the ICMC conference, Breda, 1954, Part II – Notable Features of Irish Emigration from a Catholic-Social Viewpoint. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrant Section, International Catholic Migration Congress: Breda, AB8/B/XIX/22, DDA.

force'. Despite this, the CSWB considered that its model was appropriate and could be improved over time.¹⁶ The content of this report appears to have been designed on the one hand to argue that there were specific features of Irish migration that meant it did not really fall within the ambit of the ICMC and, on the other hand, that, in any event, the Irish hierarchy was dealing with the issues fully and appropriately. Barrett, and McQuaid, may have hoped that this would have the effect of keeping them in good standing with the ICMC whilst deflecting any further scrutiny or criticism.

NDS Report to the ICMC – Irish migrants as English Catholics saw them

However, the ICMC's interest in Irish migration to Britain continued and in 1960, the secretary, Dr. Kempschoer, commissioned two independent reports from English sources, for presentation at ICMC congresses. One of these was commissioned from John Hickey and was based on his study of urban Catholicism in Cardiff. This was largely concerned with the development of the Catholic community in Cardiff during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and its content will not be considered further here. The second was commissioned from the Newman Demographic Survey (NDS), a group of British Catholic social scientists. The NDS formed part of the Newman Association, a voluntary society for Catholic graduates founded in 1942. The NDS was a member of the International Federation of Catholic Institutes for Social and Socio-religious Research (FERES) based, like the ICMC, in Geneva. The report was commissioned as a result of discussions between FERES and the

¹⁶ Ibid.

ICMC.¹⁷ The focus was on the arrangements for the integration of Irish Catholics in England and, as such, it provides an English Catholic perspective on Irish immigration in relation to the policy objective of the English Hierarchy that Irish migrants should be fully integrated into English Catholic parishes. The report included a review of routine statistics, the *Report of the Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems*, ICMC literature, and articles published in ‘periodical literature’. This was supplemented with face-to-face interviews in Dublin and England.¹⁸ Using UK National Insurance registration data, the NDS were able to calculate that in 1959 over 20 per cent of those registering had been previously registered thereby ‘confirming the common observation that many Irish shift back and forth between the two countries for a considerable time before settling here’.¹⁹ The report noted that a particular feature of migration from Ireland to Britain was that a proportion of emigrants were ‘social’ or ‘moral failures’ including unmarried pregnant girls and ‘husbands deserting their families’. The NDS opined that these ‘failures’ ‘do so much harm to Ireland and to Catholicism in Britain and constitute an almost impossible task for the church there.’²⁰

The NDS then moved on to look at qualitative data on ‘the home environment of the immigrant’ and ‘the attitude of the immigrant’. For the section on ‘the home environment’, the NDS drew mainly on the social anthropological study of rural Ireland carried out by the ‘Harvard Irish Survey’

¹⁷ Information from A.E.C.W. Spencer, former Director, NDS (interview with the author, 26 February 2009).

¹⁸ A.E.C.W. Spencer, ‘The suppression of a research report. Another long slow failure. Reflections on a very secret disaster’, 25 April 2008. Unpublished note sent by Spencer to the DDA and filed with McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrant Section, Newman Demographic Survey, AB8/B/XIX/15, DDA.

¹⁹ Spencer, *Arrangements for the Integration of Irish Immigrants*, p.10.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.15.

between 1931 and 1936. This had subsequently been published as *Family and Community in Ireland* with Conrad Arensberg and Solon Kimball as the lead authors. The NDS drew on a summary from an article on emigration by Father A.J. Humphreys, published in *Christus Rex* in 1955.²¹ Based on this summary, the NDS report asserted that, whilst it was impossible to describe an ‘average’ migrant, it was possible to look for a ‘modal migrant’ (although the finer points of distinction between these terms were not discussed) and to describe the environment ‘that has moulded and influenced the majority’. This environment was represented by the rural west of Ireland, with migrants coming from ‘the poorest land, from the smaller and smallest holdings, and the smaller and smallest villages. They are relatives of farmers, or employed by farmers [or] unskilled labourers or domestics.’²² The basic unit of community, production, economy and power was the ‘small-farm family’. This patriarchal unit was similar to that of ‘European peasantry’ in general but had some specific features, including late average age at marriage, ‘maternal possessiveness, especially of sons; in the young men, a sense of inferiority (often covered by aggressiveness); feigned indifference to women; overt preference for male companionship and for sports, drinking and contention.’²³ Within this rural world, the priest was accorded leader status.²⁴ Although the vast majority of the population attended Mass, this could not be taken to reflect ‘positive religious beliefs’ since pressure to conform to the social norm was likely to be a major factor – just as not attending church would be in countries where the majority did not do so.²⁵

²¹ Ibid., p.18.

²² Ibid., pp.17-18.

²³ Ibid., pp.18-20.

²⁴ Ibid., p.20.

²⁵ Ibid., p.21.

Removal of this social pressure on migrating to Britain was clearly a factor in the 'leakage problem'.²⁶

The NDS also considered certain social and cultural aspects to be highly relevant in 'the problem of integrating the migrant in the new society.' One of these was 'the general absence of "Sex education", deplored by many Irish social commentators'.²⁷ The second issue identified was the ambivalent position of the Irish migrant in Britain as regards the 'cultural environment'. 'Practically all' Irish migrants spoke English as their first language with Gaelic 'something that they learn at school'. They were also familiar with 'English' culture through 'films, broadcasting, literature, the English popular press, tourists, radio and now television...[and] the influence of past emigrants who return for holidays, retirement, or to stay after many years in Britain.' Irish migrants were, however, at a disadvantage compared to their British workmates in terms of education. Compulsory schooling continued to the fourteenth birthday in Ireland compared to the fifteenth in Britain.²⁸

The combination of these peculiar socio-economic, religious and cultural factors was argued to give rise to particular 'elements' likely to 'impede, delay or prevent integration into Catholic society' in Britain. These elements were:

a lack of self-discipline and self-control, an undeveloped sense of responsibility towards work-mates, employers and non-Catholics, a social inferiority complex, a lack of articulateness about religion, a sense of ignorance about sex, and a view of clergy-laity relationships that polarises at either complete acceptance of priestly authority in all matters, or equally complete rejection of any priestly authority.²⁹

²⁶ Ibid., p.21.

²⁷ The NDS report quotes Mary Claire Prendergast, 'The family that isn't', *Christus Rex*, XIV, 2 (1960), p.95, cited in Spencer, *Arrangements for Integration*, p.21.

²⁸ Ibid., p.22.

²⁹ Ibid., p.22.

The report moved on from ‘the home environment’ to look at ‘the attitude of the immigrant’. It acknowledged the lack of ‘accurate, comprehensive, relevant information’ but argued that ‘some attempt must be made to assess the attitude of immigrants as a preliminary to consideration of the arrangements needed to promote their integration’. Information on ‘the attitude of immigrants’ was drawn from articles in journals such as *The Furrow* and *Christus Rex* and the NDS acknowledged the methodological weaknesses of this material.³⁰ This section of the report indicated the ambivalent position of the immigrant in English society. On the one hand, initial impressions would have involved ‘culture shock’ particularly manifested as challenges to the church’s ‘teaching on sexual morals in Ireland’. Thus, at home, ‘courtship which is seen elsewhere as the essential preliminary to marriage, suffer[s] greatly from sweeping condemnations of dancing and company-keeping’, whereas these activities were commonplace in England. The Irishman lacked the ‘necessary intellectual equipment’ to engage in ‘friendly discussion of religious differences’. He would, however, observe that most English people were not ‘Cromwells, Orangemen, Black and Tans or bigots’ but were ‘good pagans, whose charity often puts Catholics to shame’. Since English people ‘seem[ed] nice enough’, it would be a small step to accepting their behaviours and moral norms, such as failure to go to church, acceptance of divorce, sex outside marriage, contraception and so on.³¹

This ambivalence was compounded by the mixed messages received in Ireland from Church and state. Prior to the Commission on Emigration, there had been a ‘dual condemnation’ of emigration by both bodies. Subsequently,

³⁰ Ibid., pp.23-24.

³¹ Ibid., pp.24-26.

the state had moved to an acceptance of ‘the inevitability of emigration...though [no politician] dare say so openly.’ The church, in dialogue with the English hierarchy, had moved to a much more positive position, stressing the ‘missionary character of emigration and encourag[ing] the emigrant to accept the role of apostle in England, following in the long Irish tradition that has planted the faith all over the English-speaking world’. However, mixed messages were still being sent out by the church in Ireland. Thus, as the emigrant ‘buys his ticket he will remember what the Redemptorist said at the mission: “A ticket to London is a ticket to hell!” and he would leave Ireland with a sense of guilt and a troubled conscience, unsure whether he was going ‘as a missionary among the English...[or] endanger[ing] his immortal soul’.³² No evidence was provided to demonstrate that these ‘mixed messages’ were being given out widely or whether migrants did think about emigration in these terms.

The attitudinal and cultural background of the Irish gave rise to a range of social and health problems. These included drunkenness, alcoholism, preference for cheap, sub-standard, multi-occupancy accommodation, inability to save and budget, poor diet, failure to use medical services appropriately and so on. This was not only detrimental to the migrants’ own wellbeing but, because these features were associated with a high prevalence of tuberculosis, potentially put others at risk as well.³³ The ease with which a migrant could return to Ireland meant that many came to Britain ‘to try out’ life there and had no interest in integrating into the community.³⁴

The report described the work of the CSWB but made the point that, using the CSWB’s own figures for migrant contacts as the numerator and the National

³² Ibid., p.26.

³³ Ibid., pp.29, 30.

³⁴ Ibid., p.31.

Insurance scheme figures for entrants and re-entrants from Ireland as the denominator, in 1959, ‘only 2.3 per cent of emigrant breadwinners had their English addresses passed on to the English clergy through the Bureau’, which would suggest that the key objective of the CSWB was not being met.³⁵

Overall, the NDS estimated that in 1959 about 10 per cent of all first entrants from Ireland to the British National Insurance scheme had had some form of contact with the CSWB. The vast majority of such contact (4,279 out of 5,198 total contacts, 82 per cent) took the form of ‘assistance by the Port Welfare Service’ – a voluntary befriending scheme run by the Legion of Mary using volunteers.³⁶ Many of these contacts would have been no more than a brief conversation with a volunteer at the point of departure. The work being initiated from Ireland but with the co-operation of both hierarchies was described, covering the lay apostolate (Legion of Mary) scheme, the Enniscorthy Irish Missions scheme and the ‘Irish Curates Scheme’ (see Chapter 2 for a fuller discussion of these). English Catholic organisations likely to work with Irish migrants were considered and included the Young Christian Workers, Catholic professional guilds likely to include an Irish membership (including the Catholic Nurses Guild, the Catholic Transport Guilds and the Guild of St. Luke, SS. Cosmas and Damien (sic)), Diocesan Child Rescue Societies, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council and the Catholic Missionary Society.³⁷

The report concluded that there was a considerable amount of activity relating to the integration of Irish Catholics but that this was piecemeal and lacked any national oversight or co-ordination. There was no organisation to co-

³⁵ Ibid., p.54.

³⁶ Ibid., pp.56-57.

³⁷ Ibid., p.72.

ordinate the work of the individual organisations, prevent duplication, lead overall strategy, evaluate initiatives, stop activities of ‘doubtful value’, support the introduction of new initiatives to ‘fill gaps’, or provide support services and collate statistics.³⁸ Accordingly, the establishment of such a national body within the English Catholic church was the first recommendation of the report. Although ‘displaced persons and refugees; [and] other immigrants, and emigrants’ had been beyond the remit of the NDS report, the recommendation was for a single national body to co-ordinate work for these groups as well as the Irish. The funding for this, estimated to require £25-30,000 per year, could be raised via a collection on a ‘Migrant and Refugee Sunday’.³⁹ The designation of such a Sunday was a general recommendation of the ICMC and an Emigrant Sunday was already established in Ireland. The intention of this in England and Wales would be to ‘remind Catholics of their duties to immigrants and refugees.’⁴⁰

At diocesan level, the model of ‘Irish centres’ and hostels, already established in some areas, should be consolidated and extended to cover all areas with Irish immigration. The report noted that, in particular, ‘many more Irish hostels appear to be needed’ but did not set out any basis for this.⁴¹ The Irish centres should ‘function as accommodation and employment agencies, being licensed where necessary’, ‘provide a wide variety of social facilities’, ‘house the diocesan headquarters of work for Irish immigrants’ and ‘act as information bureaux’. A lay professional social worker should manage each centre, with support from ‘an Irish chaplain substantially free of other duties’ to

³⁸ Ibid., p.73.

³⁹ Ibid., p.107.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.107.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp.107-108.

support ‘the spiritual care of immigrants’.⁴² No view was expressed about the number of Irish in a given area required to make a centre and or hostel viable; although the ‘town’ rather than individual parishes was suggested as the appropriate ‘territorial basis’ for planning.⁴³ The source of funding for the recommended centres and hostels was not considered, although it was suggested that the costs of the professional social worker should be met by those parishes ‘benefitting from her services.’⁴⁴ It was also suggested that the ‘mobilisation of well integrated Irish to help the newcomers’ should be a priority for ‘local effort’.⁴⁵ The difficulty of achieving the ‘mobilisation of the well-integrated Irish’ had been noted by the Irish Embassy (as discussed in Chapter 4). It is not clear from the NDS report that they had identified any better ways of engaging them.

The report went on to recommend that the Irish government should provide funding ‘for practical welfare ventures.’⁴⁶ Given that the Irish economy benefitted by around £5 million per annum from ‘emigrants’ remittances from Britain’, a contribution of £50,000 per annum towards hostels or Irish centres was suggested plus additional funding towards the salaries of social workers.⁴⁷ The report was more hesitant in commenting on the work of the Irish hierarchy, noting ‘the need for caution in discussing affairs in another country’, a caution clearly not felt necessary when recommending actions for the Irish Government.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, suggestions for the enhancement and extension of existing services were made, including consideration of a stronger national body

⁴² Ibid., p.108.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.109.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p.109, no source for the estimate of remittance value was cited.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

to augment the Episcopal Committee on Emigration; establishment of Anglo-Irish missions in areas of high emigration; fund raising through the Migration Sunday collections; extension of the Patrician movement in England; and the extension of emigration committees in towns and villages. These latter should ‘harness experience of returning migrants’, run ‘lectures and study groups on British culture, life, leisure, work, politics’, ‘provide advice and help to prospective emigrants; keep in touch with emigrants’ and ‘notify CSWB of impending departures’. To support this, diocesan arrangements should be strengthened. Finally, ‘legislation about unaccompanied migration of young girls’ should be considered.⁴⁹ These recommendations did not link clearly to any of the findings presented in the report and in some instances appeared not to have engaged fully with what was already in place, or with the problems that some of these initiatives had encountered – such as the low contact rate for the CSWB and Legion of Mary volunteers with migrants, which the NDS itself had identified. The NDS were still suggesting legislation to restrict migration of young women, despite this having been rejected by the Irish government on human rights grounds in the early 1950s. The report noted the tendency to regard ‘Irish immigrants as a fairly homogeneous mass’ for whom ‘mass solutions’ could be found, rather than focusing on ‘the needs of particular groups’.⁵⁰ However, the NDS recommendations achieved no better identification of sub-groups or specific solutions than other agencies had done.

The way in which Irish migrants were characterised in the two reports differed widely. Barrett’s argument was that Irish migrants were culturally and linguistically similar to the British. The main distinguishing feature of the Irish,

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.109.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.101.

at population level, was that they were predominantly Catholic whereas British society was largely secular. Irish migrants, therefore, needed help to integrate into a Catholic parish in Britain, but beyond that there was little need for anything more. Although Barrett acknowledged the familiar claim that the Irish had ‘an inferiority complex’ and might drift into bad company and bad habits, he did not argue for any particular intervention for this. The NDS, on the other hand, took a different line, placing much more emphasis on the problems of Irish migrants and the cultural and psychological causes of these, as they saw them. They argued that the Irish were not culturally similar to the British. Rather, they came from a patriarchal peasant society in which paternal authoritarianism combined with maternal manipulation to produce young adults who were at best inadequate to the demands of modern industrial society and at worst deviant. Furthermore, some of the most inadequate and deviant found their way to Britain where they posed a risk not only to their own welfare (through failure to look after their health) but also to their new neighbours (through contagion, drunkenness, criminality and other anti-social behaviour). Interventions were required for this, as indicated in their recommendations.

Given this difference in emphasis and conclusions, it is not surprising that the Irish hierarchy, represented by McQuaid and Barrett, were not supportive of the report. Relations between Anthony Spencer, the lead author of the NDS, and the CSWB had started well. Spencer had liaised with Barrett before commencing work and believed he had the co-operation of the CSWB. The CSWB had provided details of their work and statistical returns for inclusion in the report.⁵¹ Barrett had informed McQuaid of the NDS project and his response had been

⁵¹ A.E.C.W. Spencer, interview with the author, 26 February 2009.

supportive, going so far as to state that ‘if some of our people had taken a tithe of the trouble that Canon Flood and Mr Spencer have so carefully taken, we should not have to regret the untoward accounts that have been given of the emigrant situation on both the English and Irish side.’⁵² Unfortunately, the account of the ‘emigrant situation’ that resulted was, like the earlier ones to which he referred, not to McQuaid’s liking.

A meeting was held in June 1960 with the aim of agreeing a draft acceptable to the Irish hierarchy, represented by Barrett. The meeting was difficult from the start. As recalled by Spencer, Barrett and the other Irish representatives entered the meeting together, with Barrett declaring that the report was ‘dynamite’ and unacceptable in its present form.⁵³ The Irish representatives criticised the report at length, particularly the section on home environment and attitudes of migrants, which they considered to be based ‘solely on personal impressions without evidence of any established factual information’.⁵⁴ Barrett requested that these sections be withdrawn. The meeting was chaired by Professor M.P. Fogarty, was chair of the NDS and a professor of sociology, who strongly supported the inclusion of the contended sections. The reasons for his support emerged during the meeting – he hoped to secure a large grant to investigate ‘the attitude of the immigrant’ and was anxious to demonstrate that no good current information on this was available. This argument achieved no traction with the Irish representatives.⁵⁵

⁵² Letter from McQuaid to Barrett, 28 November 1959. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrant Section, Newman Demographic Survey, AB8/B/XIX/15, DDA.

⁵³ A.E.C.W. Spencer, interview with the author, 26 February 2009.

⁵⁴ C.J. Barrett, Draft report on the conference held at Newman Association House, London on 2 June 1960 for discussion of the first draft of the Survey of the Irish in England being prepared by the Newman Demographic Survey under the direction of Mr A.E.C.W. Spencer. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrant Section, Newman Demographic Survey, AB8/B/XIX/15, DDA.

⁵⁵ Barrett, Draft report on the conference held at Newman Association House, pp.2,3. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Newman Demographic Survey, AB8/B/XIX/15, DDA.

In subsequent correspondence, McQuaid made it very plain to Cardinal Godfrey that he believed the 'Survey' as currently drafted had the potential to 'destroy' the relationship between the two hierarchies and their collaboration on Irish integration into English parish life. He stressed that if the report, or anything like it, were presented at the ICMC conference, he would 'counter it' by taking action through the Holy See. He requested Godfrey's intervention to prevent 'an impending disaster'.⁵⁶ Spencer now offered a redraft of the contentious section, making it clearer that good information was lacking and that what was available was based on opinion and anecdote taken from publications such as *Christus Rex* and *The Furrow*. Spencer stressed that information on immigrant attitudes was essential to successful integration since it was not then known whether prevalent attitudes were a help or a hindrance in this respect, or whether attitudes could be changed. Spencer also made the point that many of the problems experienced by Irish migrants were not unique to them but also experienced by members of the wider community. Without better knowledge of Irish cultural and attitudinal factors, it was impossible to judge whether services should be targeted specifically at the Irish or whether by doing so members of 'the native population' might be excluded from services from which they too could benefit.⁵⁷

Monsignor Derek Worlock now became involved on behalf of Cardinal Godfrey. He supported the inclusion of the revised draft but this was not acceptable to McQuaid who continued to insist in the removal of the material on background and attitudes in its entirety. McQuaid was also displeased that Godfrey had delegated the matter, and liaison with McQuaid, to Worlock rather

⁵⁶ Letter from McQuaid to Cardinal Godfrey, 5 June 1960. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Newman Demographic Survey, AB8/B/XIX/15, DDA.

⁵⁷ NDS, 'Report', pp.12 a,b,c – for insertion after p.12 of the original draft.

than dealing with it himself. Writing to Godfrey to express his ‘puzzlement’ at this, he also made it clear that, beyond ‘absorbing the activity of laymen’, he did not think that surveys were of much use and that they were ‘no substitute for the traditional hard work of pastoral visitation, preaching and hearing confessions’.⁵⁸ In his letter to Godfrey, McQuaid stressed the potential ‘crisis’ that submitting the report to the ICMC represented and thanked Godfrey for his ‘vigour’ in pursuing the matter, although it is not clear from the archives that the situation was as grave as McQuaid suggested or that Godfrey was very active in doing anything about it.⁵⁹ Godfrey’s response was apologetic, with an assurance that Worlock had not in anyway advocated the acceptance of Spencer’s revised draft.⁶⁰ That McQuaid was seizing the opportunity to define the balance of power between the two hierarchies in respect of Irish migrant issues is indicated by his subsequent letter to Barrett in which he stated ‘we have [Worlock] where we want him to be and we shall keep him there’.⁶¹ McQuaid made sure that the second report by an English researcher for the ICMC, that by Hickey describing Irish settlement in Cardiff, did not get presented in full either, in this case by stating that if it did, he would ‘denounce it’ both to the ICMC and to the Senior Consistorial Congregation in Rome.⁶² On receiving Barrett’s report that Hickey’s paper had been amended to his satisfaction, McQuaid

⁵⁸ Letter from McQuaid to Cardinal Godfrey, 14 June 1960. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Newman Demographic Survey, AB8/B/XIX/15, DDA. The English hierarchy was no supporter of social investigation either. Initially a voluntary body, the NDS was briefly funded by the Westminster Archdiocese in the early 1960s. Funding was withdrawn by Godfrey’s successor, Cardinal Heenan, who considered social surveys to be of doubtful value in ‘planning future pastoral strategy’, see Hornsby-Smith (ed.), *Catholics in England, 1950-2000* (London, 1999), p.7.

⁵⁹ Letter from McQuaid to Cardinal Godfrey, 14 June 1960. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Newman Demographic Survey, AB8/B/XIX/15, DDA.

⁶⁰ Letter from Cardinal Godfrey to McQuaid, 16 June 1960. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Newman Demographic Survey, AB8/B/XIX/15, DDA.

⁶¹ Letter from McQuaid to Barrett, 18 June 1960. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Newman Demographic Survey, AB8/B/XIX/15, DDA.

⁶² Ibid.

commented ‘you have Hickey where we want him. These people, for having been hammered, respect us and are somewhat afraid’.⁶³ The NDS report was finally blocked by a letter from Barrett to the Secretary of the ICMC.⁶⁴ McQuaid concluded that the English researchers would have ‘learned [their] lesson in tackling us’.⁶⁵ He wrote to Godfrey ‘as if he were fully responsible for the English change of front’ presumably to create a record indicating that the English hierarchy had objected to the reports and instigated their review or withdrawal.⁶⁶

Richard Hauser – Action Research for the ‘Irish Problem’ – an independent, secular view

Similar blocking tactics were used by McQuaid in response to another piece of social investigation, carried out by Richard Hauser, director of the Centre for Group Studies in London. In 1963, Hauser produced a report identifying what he saw as the problems of Irish migrants in Britain and setting out some recommendations to tackle them.⁶⁷ Hauser, and the Centre for Group Studies, are somewhat obscure but some background can be pieced together from various sources. An Austrian Jew by background, he had training in academic social

⁶³ Letter from Barrett to McQuaid, 6 August 1960, with autograph note from McQuaid. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Newman Demographic Survey, AB8/B/XIX/15, DDA.

⁶⁴ Autograph note from McQuaid to Barrett, 11 October 1960. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Newman Demographic Survey, AB8/B/XIX/15, DDA.

⁶⁵ Autograph note from McQuaid to Barrett, 24 October 1960. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Newman Demographic Survey, AB8/B/XIX/15, DDA.

⁶⁶ Letter from Barrett to McQuaid, with autograph note from McQuaid, 8 August 1960. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Newman Demographic Survey, AB8/B/XIX/15, DDA.

⁶⁷ Richard Hauser, ‘Hypothesis of Preliminary Action Research for the Irish Problem’, Centre for Group Studies, London, 1963 (typewritten document). McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Richard Hauser, AB8/B/XIX/17, DDA.

science and became an early exponent of action research methodology.⁶⁸ This is a cyclical process, based on the four steps of ‘plan, act, observe, reflect’. It can be used as a means of simultaneously analysing social problems, proposing social action to tackle them, piloting the proposals, then evaluating the results and modifying the interventions accordingly. The term ‘action research’ was coined by the German sociologist, Kurt Lewin, in 1946. The methodology was further developed by Eric Trist, a London social psychiatrist, who used it to inform his work on repatriation of German prisoners of war. Both Lewin and Trist were concerned with achieving systemic change within and between organisations. They emphasised the importance of group relations in achieving change – on the principle that group involvement in decision making would increase the likelihood of the resulting decision being implemented on the ground.⁶⁹

By his own account, Hauser had established a considerable reputation in applying action research to a range of problems in a number of countries, including Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Australia, New Zealand, India and Italy. In Italy, Hauser had worked with the Catholic authorities and other agencies to establish ‘the first parole probation system in Rome after the war’. He had subsequently worked in Australia on migrant integration.⁷⁰ He then moved to London, where he set up the Centre for Group Studies. Hauser was

⁶⁸ Hauser stressed his Jewish background in a letter to McQuaid, using it to create a link between himself and the Venerable Leibermann, a nineteenth-century Jewish convert who became the first Superior General of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost. McQuaid had a personal link with this order, having been educated by them. Letter from Hauser to McQuaid, 17 March 1964. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Richard Hauser, AB8/B/XIX/17, DDA.

⁶⁹ Rory O’Brien, ‘An Overview of the Methodological Approach of Action Research’ in Roberto Richardson (ed.), *Theory and Practice of Action Research* (Brazil: Joao Pessoa, 2001). [English translation consulted at: http://www.web.net/~robrien/papers/arfinal.html#_Toc26184661 (22 July 2009)].

⁷⁰ Letter from Hauser to McQuaid, 17 March 1964. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Richard Hauser, AB8/B/XIX/17, DDA.

sufficiently established in London to receive commissions from the Home Office, including the production of a report on the ‘problem’ of homosexuality in Britain, commissioned as a response to the Wolfenden Report, in 1958.⁷¹ Hauser had also used the technique of rapid survey followed by pilot intervention in a number of settings including ‘prisoners in HM Prison Wandsworth’; ‘mental patients in three hospitals, including alcoholics’; ‘down and outs in London’; ‘failure groups in schools’; ‘work with unmarried mothers’ and prostitutes. Hauser concluded from his research that all ‘these problems’ were ‘produced by social inadequacy’, although he offered no definition of what this might mean. In researching these areas, Hauser had become aware of the high proportion of Irish migrants in these ‘problem’ groups and his interviews with them, in the course of his other research, led him to make some initial conclusions and recommendations.⁷² In doing so, he appears to have been acting on his own initiative – there is no record that the work was commissioned by any agency in England or in Ireland. Hauser’s report started with the hypothesis that

a certain percentage of Irish migrants are abysmally unprepared for the stresses of British industrial society because of the extreme change in social climate and conditions, and in the loss of much of the warm atmosphere and community feeling they are accustomed to in Ireland.

The Irish, he claimed, were disproportionately associated with the social problems he identified. He quoted figures to demonstrate that 40 per cent of crimes of violence coming before the Central Criminal Court in London were committed by ‘Irishmen’, although he noted that these were ‘grievous bodily

⁷¹ Hauser’s report was subsequently published as: Richard Hauser, *The Homosexual Society: A New Approach to the Problem* (London, 1962).

⁷² Hauser, ‘Hypothesis of Preliminary Action Research’, typescript report. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Richard Hauser, AB8/B/XIX/17, DDA.

harm due to pub-brawls and fits of temper' rather than 'robbery and violence'. Ten percent of Borstal boys were Irish. 40 per cent of the 12,000 homeless in London were 'said to be Irish'. In 1960, he claimed, 800 out of 6,500 unmarried mothers in London were Irish. In 1961, '1 out of every 6 prostitutes brought before the court were Irish. Some pimps boast that the Irish girls are the easiest to break into prostitution.' In addition, 'a high percentage of alcoholics are Irish and often quite a number end up in mental hospitals and prisons.'⁷³ Hauser did not cite any sources for these statistics. He considered that these problems were all the result of social inadequacy, which made the Irish unable to respond to unfamiliar situations. This, in turn, resulted in a 'feeling of inferiority'. This was then compounded by 'lack of family life in sub-standard housing...to depress all concerned.'⁷⁴ The tendency of 'many young Irish' to travel to England without any money or plans for a job or accommodation, meant that 'they lay themselves open to distress situations from the start'. Hauser claimed that the tendency of the Irish not to 'form solid communities in England' resulted in 'isolation...loneliness and apathy...result[ing] in hopelessness and defeatism'. As a result, migrants led lives based on 'hire purchase, bingo and television...lacking in intensity and assertion'. This was not a good basis on which to raise second generation Irish migrant children and could result in 'failures and breakdown cases who rebel against conditions'.⁷⁵

The more successful migrants did not provide support or leadership for their less successful fellows: 'many of the happy and successful Irish...refuse to associate with Irish clubs and communities because they feel that the element of

⁷³ Hauser, 'Hypothesis of Preliminary Action Research', pp.2-4. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Richard Hauser, AB8/B/XIX/17, DDA.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.1.

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp.2-3.

inadequate, who produce the public image of the Irish in England, will discredit them. This widens the gap between the successful and non-successful.’⁷⁶

According to Hauser, ‘the bodies working for the Irish in England, with some remarkable exceptions, do exceedingly little.’ Migrants did not bother making contact with these organisations since ‘they hear from others that virtually nothing is being done for them.’ Some of the organisations, wishing to be seen as ‘respectable’, had a reputation for helping only ‘nice’ migrants and ‘are callous vis-a-vis the others.’⁷⁷ All of this tended to strengthen the ‘inferiority’ or ‘Paddy-complex’ of the Irish – leading them to become, as they stayed on in Britain, ‘more Irish than the Irish in Ireland’. This sense of inferiority was strengthened by interaction with English Catholics who ‘feel the Irish to be the poor relatives’. Hauser contrasted this with the ‘reverse’ situation in Australia where ‘Irish (second generation) Catholics are anything but fond of the (poor relative) Italian migrants.’⁷⁸

Hauser’s proposed solutions included action in England to deal with ‘the distress and breakdown situations which face many migrants’ and prevention in Ireland to ensure that migrants were better prepared for the stresses of industrial society. This latter he saw as being the rightful domain of the education system. His pilot work with ‘the 30 per cent failure group’ of adolescents in English schools indicated that they could be helped ‘to assert themselves in a socially valuable way’ and he offered to work with the ‘those concerned with Irish education, which no doubt must be blamed to a great extent for the difficulties and tragedies described’.⁷⁹ The Irish Government was advised to follow the

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.4.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.5.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.6.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.9.

example of the ‘West Indies’ in preventing ‘minors, physically disabled and old people who could not possibly look after themselves, from migrating, unless they have someone they can go to.’ They were also advised to set up ‘an experimental centre’ where ‘1-2 day courses for intending migrants’ would be delivered. He further proposed piloting a system of professional community workers to work with Irish migrants in England. These individuals (who could include priests) would be ‘trained on group work lines and be responsible for the morale of areas, rather than for purely case work’, volunteers from the local Irish community would be trained to work with them.⁸⁰ Hauser was advocating what would now be called a ‘community development’ project. His strategy was not based on easing the transition of initial migration and settlement within an industrial society, but on the creation of sustainable, self-contained, migrant communities – ones in which ‘Irishness’ rather than ‘Catholicism’ appears to have been the defining factor. This vision of ‘separate’ Irish communities is at variance with the much more integrationist thinking and approach of the Irish and English Hierarchies.

Hauser made particular suggestions for ‘especially endangered groups’, including ex-prisoners and Borstal boys; alcoholics; prostitutes; young unmarried mothers and drug addicts. For work with these groups, ‘special liaison workers’ who had personal experience of the problems (‘ex-alcoholics, ex-prisoners’) should be trained to work with clients ‘in the acute stage’. For work with prostitutes, nuns ‘not necessarily dressed as nuns’ could work with the girls, particularly because ‘many pimps are Catholic [and] would never harm

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.10.

a nun whether in habit or not.’⁸¹ There was little that was new in Hauser’s assessment of the needs of Irish immigrants. Like all previous commentators he considered the Irish ‘inferiority complex’ to be at the root of the problems.

Hauser promoted his report in Ireland through contact with the Irish Association of Social Workers who invited him to present his findings at a meeting at University College, Dublin in November 1963. Neither the Catholic hierarchy nor the CSWB were involved in this meeting. It received wide press coverage, with the *Irish Independent* calling on the government to set up an enquiry into ‘the normal fate of younger migrants in their first year away from home’ and the creation of a ‘welfare section’ attached to the embassy in London.⁸² The *Irish Times*, on the other hand, felt that it was not the business of the Irish education system to ‘produce young people for export’ and that it was unfair to criticise the Irish system on this ground.⁸³

This meeting was followed up by a private meeting in January 1964 called by the Irish Association of Social Workers ‘for the purpose of deciding what action might be taken as a consequence of Hauser’s speech’. The meeting was chaired by Lady Wicklow (who had chaired the earlier meeting) and was attended largely by social workers and two notable laymen – T.C.G. O’Mahony, a Dublin solicitor, who was seeking backing for ‘the production of a documentary film on emigrant problems’; and Mr Sean D. Loftus, ‘a politician who unsuccessfully contested the Dail Elections’. Cecil Barrett and Henry Gray from the CSWB ‘thought it desirable to attend.’ Barrett reported to McQuaid that whilst Gray ‘spoke and spoke very well [Barrett] got the feeling that they did not want to

⁸¹ Ibid., pp.13-14.

⁸² ‘Young Emigrants’, editorial, *Irish Independent*, November 18, 1963. Copy in McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Richard Hauser, AB8/B/XIX/17, DDA.

⁸³ ‘Irish in Britain’, editorial, *Irish Times*, November 18, 1963. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Richard Hauser, AB8/B/XIX/17, DDA.

know what is being done at the present time and over the years in the field of emigrant welfare. They were more anxious to talk a lot of hot air and to set themselves up as an action group to get the government and everyone else moving.’⁸⁴ The priorities for action identified by the group included the establishment of bureaux in Ireland’s ‘principal cities’ to provide information and courses and to liaise with employment agencies in Great Britain; the making of a film showing conditions in England to be used ‘at Parish level’ in Ireland; and the keeping of registers of emigrants at parish level. In Ireland, there should be ‘educational reform’ and ‘possible changes in institutions for children to meet the emotional needs of the child and [better equip them] for the demands of the modern world’ and the ‘Trade Unions should provide more apprenticeships’. In Britain, a ‘prestige centre to promote Irish Industry and encourage a sense of pride among emigrants in Irish achievement’ should be set up in London; ‘nationally backed welfare centres’ should be established and the Irish government should co-operate with the LCC (sic) and the British Home Office to set up ‘special Irish Hostels’ and fund probation officers ‘to deal with Irish prisoners’. A scheme for ‘the control of emigration, especially those under 18’ should be drawn up and ‘Juvenile Employment Officers’ should be appointed to Irish Labour Exchanges.⁸⁵

These proposals seem even less evidence based than those put forward by Hauser and also ignored the work that was already being by the CSWB and through the Irish hierarchy. Many of them were clearly unrealistic and unaffordable as well as being of doubtful value in terms of likely outcome.

⁸⁴ Letter from Barrett to McQuaid, 23 January 1964. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Richard Hauser, AB8/B/XIX/17, DDA.

⁸⁵ ‘Irish Emigration Problems’, notes of the meeting convened by the Irish Association of Social Workers on January 13, 1964. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Richard Hauser, AB8/B/XIX/17, DDA.

Many had also received previous consideration by the government or hierarchy and been dismissed as impracticable. It is therefore not surprising that McQuaid dismissed the group as ‘inchoate, with all the appearance of a pressure group’. He recommended that Barrett should ‘stand back, [while] Mr Gray would do well to attend and observe, lest we be put in the wrong in our genuine work by the group’s talk and pressure.’⁸⁶ A watching brief was therefore followed.

In March 1964, McQuaid was contacted directly by Hauser who was seeking his help in establishing a project with the Christian Brothers. Hauser had identified the particular needs of very young migrants, some only 14 years old, who came over to Britain with ‘nobody to look after them’ and no knowledge of how to use existing welfare services. The most vulnerable of this group were identified as those from industrial schools ‘deprived of normal family love, unable to learn the necessities of life like handling money and moving freely in society...It is clear that they do easily get into trouble and some of the names of such [industrial] schools are well known to anybody working in British prisons and Borstal establishments’. Hauser did not blame the Christian Brothers for this state of affairs but felt that they could benefit from ‘help and further training ...on educational group work’. The Christian Brothers had welcomed this suggestion on Hauser’s initial contact with them but had failed to follow it up. Hauser then approached McQuaid in the belief that ‘it is Your Grace who has the final word in this matter.’⁸⁷

In fact, Hauser’s contact with the Christian Brothers was news to both McQuaid and Barrett. McQuaid’s response to Hauser neatly side-stepped the

⁸⁶ Letter from McQuaid to Barrett, 27 January, 1964. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Richard Hauser, AB8/B/XIX/17, DDA.

⁸⁷ Letter from Hauser to McQuaid, 17 March 1964. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Richard Hauser, AB8/B/XIX/17, DDA.

specific issue and effectively blocked further engagement by simply stating that Hauser was misinformed and ‘the matter pertains to the Superiors of the Congregation of the Irish Christian Brothers and the Department of Education.’ It was agreed that Barrett would ‘inquire discretely [into the situation] at Artane’. Barrett commented that ‘Hauser’s evident determination to educate and train us is as puzzling as it is unsought. But then he is a difficult bird and quite aggressive.’⁸⁸ Barrett’s assessment of Hauser as a ‘difficult bird’ may have been perceptive. It is not easy to identify clear details of Hauser’s background or work from available records. The psychiatrist, David Clark, provides an account of his experiences with Hauser when he invited the latter to undertake a review of Fulbourn Mental Hospital, Cambridge, where Clark was medical Superintendent. Clark found this to be a damaging experience culminating in a badly written report containing ‘woolly ideas’ couched in ‘vague and grandiose terms’. Clark and his colleagues were unable to get any detail on Hauser’s background or training. A seminar he gave to the Royal Medico-Psychological Association was unimpressive, being devoid of argument, theory or structure.⁸⁹ In the event, Hauser did not persist in his offers to work with the Irish and the initiative of the Irish Association of Social Workers did not progress.

Conclusion

These social investigations raise interesting questions about the nature of ‘knowledge’ about Irish migrants and the legitimacy of different groups or

⁸⁸ Letter from McQuaid to Hauser, 20 March 1964; and letter from Barrett to McQuaid with autograph note from McQuaid, 23 March 1964. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Richard Hauser, AB8/B/XIX/17, DDA.

⁸⁹ David Clark, *The Story of a Mental Hospital: Fulbourn, 1858 to 1983* (London, 1996), pp. 134-140

individuals in claiming to have such knowledge or to make recommendations based upon it. Although statistical data was presented in all the reports, the main body of all of them was qualitative rather than quantitative and, despite claims to the contrary in some instances, was shaped by anecdote, biased sampling, opinion and preconceptions. Implicit within all of them is a question about the nature of Irishness (or Irish Catholicism) *vis-a-vis* Englishness (or English Catholicism) and the utility of the category 'Irish' as a basis for policy, planning and delivery of services. This was given clearest articulation by Spencer when he warned of the risk of creating special initiatives for the Irish when their needs might be no different to those of some English Catholics.⁹⁰ Barrett himself argued that migration from Ireland to England was really no different to internal migration within Ireland. This ambivalence about the category 'Irish' or 'Irish Catholic' and the nature of its boundaries with the category 'English' was not resolved to any extent by these investigations.

A striking feature is the emergence of similar themes in all the studies. As discussed above, Spencer was not reporting anything that had not been said by Irish commentators, indeed he used these as his sources. McQuaid's reaction perhaps resulted from the exploitation of an opportunity to control what could be said by the NDS at an international conference in a way that he was unable to control what was published in the pages of *The Furrow* and *Christus Rex*. In fact there is some evidence that the articles published in these journals had some influence on development of the Irish bishops' initiatives (the missions,

⁹⁰ The question of whether Irish social welfare needs differed from those of the English was also the subject of an article by Professor Fogarty at about the same time: Professor M P Fogarty, 'The Irish Immigrant: Has he a special problem?', *The Christian Democrat*, 11, 7-8 (1960), pp.309-315.

Emigrant Chaplain Scheme and so on) since copies of these journals were in McQuaid's papers on these issues in the DDA archive.

It is striking how often the concept of an Irish 'inferiority complex' was asserted as a given and accepted as the foundation of many of the 'problems' of integration yet there was effectively no attempt to unpick the concept or define what was meant by it. The suggestions for possible interventions were also remarkably similar – regardless of whether they were being made from a Catholic perspective (CSWB or NDS) or a secular one (Hauser or the Irish Social Workers Association). These invariably reflect the institutional context of their time, with a focus on structures – a bureau, a hostel etc, or processes - the provision of information or 'educational courses'. The perspective of the recipients of these initiatives and their perceived needs is almost entirely absent.

A further feature is the nature of the 'Irish migrant' who was seen by these investigators. This 'model migrant' was young, male, unskilled and immature. The Irish female migrant is almost invisible despite the fact that the ratio of female to male migrants was 3:2 over much of the period. In these reports women appear as problem categories, eg prostitutes or unmarried mothers; as objects in relation to the men (wives or mothers); or as objects for control, eg recommendations to the government to restrict young female migration. Little agency is ascribed to migrants of either gender; they are largely presented as passive recipients of initiatives and services. Hauser probably went further than the other investigators in advocating the involvement of the Irish migrants in developing and implementing solutions to their 'problems', and his

identification of ex-industrial school boys as a particularly vulnerable group showed sensitivity and, in the light of subsequent events, prescience.⁹¹

This material illuminates the way in which McQuaid (on behalf of the Irish hierarchy) interacted with other agencies on Irish migrant issues. The evidence suggests that he saw the appropriate locus of control on these matters as sitting firmly with the Irish hierarchy (in effect, with himself, largely operating through the support and agency of Barrett). Attempts by others to encroach on what he saw as this territory were blocked with considerable skill and often subtlety, but also through personal attack on individuals. Despite this power play by McQuaid and Barrett, there was considerable commonality between the three reports in that all acknowledged that personal attributes in migrants could be a hindrance to successful integration in Britain and all repeated the generally accepted belief in the Irish ‘inferiority complex’ as the root cause of any problems. However, none achieved a coherent or consistent account of ‘Irish problems’ or managed to delineate these from those experienced by others in Britain. As a result, the recommendations often appear broad and unfocussed with little sense of whether they apply to ‘all Irish’ or just a sub-group (and, if the latter, how that would be defined).

⁹¹ The Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse was set up by the Irish government in 1999 to investigate allegations of child abuse in institutions for children in Ireland. The majority of allegations related to ‘reformatory and industrial schools’ run by the Catholic Church under the supervision of the Department of Education. The commission reported in 2009. It concluded that physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect were pervasive features of the industrial school system, including Artane Industrial School. See Final Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse dated 20th May 2009 (Ryan Report) [consulted at: <http://www.childabusecommission.ie/publications/index.html> (8 September 2012)].

Chapter 6. Protecting the honour of the daughters of Eire: Welfare policy for Irish female migrants to England, 1940-1972

Introduction

When McQuaid established the Emigrant Section of the CSWB in 1942, he made its first priority ‘the care of women and girls’.¹ His choice of phrase drew on the established vocabulary of moral welfare work, with its components of protection, prevention and rescue designed to manage female sexual behaviour and its unwelcome consequences: illegitimate pregnancy and prostitution. That this was intentional, rather than merely a chance similarity of phrasing, is indicated by the clear link to concerns regarding the moral welfare of female emigrants raised during the time of his predecessor. These included representations from Cardinal Hinsley, Archbishop of Westminster, about the high number of pregnant single Irish women presenting to his diocesan Crusade of Rescue and Hinsley’s concerns that young Irish women in London without accommodation or employment were at risk of drifting into prostitution. McQuaid may also have been influenced by the establishment in Westminster of a Catholic Committee for Moral Welfare Work for Women and Girls, the emulation of which had been commended to the Irish bishops by the Irish government at the time of Hinsley’s approaches to them. British moral welfare organisations had also raised concerns about the risks to young Irish women travelling alone of ‘white slaving’ and McQuaid himself was dismayed by anecdotal reports of young women arriving on the streets of Dublin with no one to meet them. Statistical data on Irish emigration also identified young, single women migrating alone as a particular feature. Cecil Barrett, Director of the

¹ McQuaid, Inaugural speech to the CSWB, 17 June 1942. McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XIX/1a, DDA.

CSWB, was certainly aware of the large number of young women under twenty emigrating to Britain when he reported on the work of the CSWB to the International Catholic Migration Congress in 1954.² There were, therefore, good reasons, based on contemporary ‘moral welfare’ policy thinking and the demographics of Irish emigration, to make the ‘care of women and girls’ a continuing priority for the CSWB and the Irish bishops. This chapter assesses the extent to which McQuaid’s primary objective for the CSWB was reflected in the work of the Bureau and in the subsequent initiatives of the Episcopal Committee on Emigration. It will also look at policy arguments and responses in both Ireland and England across a range of governmental and voluntary organisations and map the interactions between them. The Irish Catholic hierarchy, under the direction and oversight of the Archbishop of Dublin, McQuaid, assumed the lead role in policy development and provision for Irish female migrants in Britain over this period. The Irish hierarchy’s framing of the problems experienced by Irish women in Britain as ones of moral welfare which were best addressed through interventions to encourage continuation of religious belief and practice was not challenged by other agencies in Ireland or Britain. The Irish hierarchy’s secondment of priests to encourage religious participation of the Irish in England effectively absolved other agencies from the need to respond to Irish migrant need. The acceptance by agencies of the centrality of Catholicism to Irish identity meant that there were virtually no attempts to offer support to Irish women in difficulty within any alternative setting.

Migration from Ireland between 1940 and 1970 was notable not only for its extent (around 500,000 migrated over the period, mostly to England) but also for

² Cecil Barrett, Report on Irish Migration for the ICMC conference, Breda, 1954. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, ICMC: Breda, AB8/B/XIX/22, DDA.

the gender and age distribution of the migrants. Between 1946 and 1951, and again from 1961 to 1971, female migration exceeded that of males. Data on the age of migrants is available for the period 1943-1951, when it was recorded on the Irish government travel permits required over that time. During this period, female emigrants were significantly younger than males – 69 per cent were under 25 years, compared to 46 per cent of males.³ The Irish female emigrant was likely to be single and migrating on her own account rather than as part of a family group. The younger age of female compared to male migrants is accounted for by the large numbers of females who migrated to take up posts in domestic service or as trainee nurses. The age profile for both of these occupations was younger than that for the semi- and unskilled work that drew the majority of male migrants.⁴

The extent to which female migration was a focus of public and political discourse during the period 1945-1960 has been discussed by a number of authors.⁵ Pauric Travers notes that female emigration was seen by many commentators, steeped in a vision of a rural Ireland in which land tenure within families was highly valued, as a depletion of the ‘brood stock’. The departure of young women therefore deprived men of potential wives and children and the nation of a new generation to take over the farms. It was acknowledged that young women left because of the limited opportunities open to them in Ireland, which included, for those without dowries, a lack of interest in them from

³ Commission on Emigration Reports (1954), in: National Economic and Social Council (NESC), *Economic and Social Implications of Emigration*, p.72; and Pauric Travers, “‘There was nothing for me there’: Irish female emigration, 1922-1971”, in Patrick O’Sullivan (ed.), *Irish Women and Irish Migration* (London, 1995), p.148.

⁴ Ibid., p.149.

⁵ Ibid., pp.146-167; Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, pp.185-189; Jennifer Redmond, “Sinful singleness”? Exploring the discourses on Irish single women’s emigration to England, 1922-1948’, *Women’s History Review*, 17, 3 (2008), pp.455-476; Daly, *The Slow Failure*, pp.168-172.

potential land-holding husbands.⁶ However, whereas male migration was seen as a regrettable but understandable response to economic pressures, female migration was seen as much less rational or necessary. Thus, it was presented as a result of flightiness, dissatisfaction with Irish life and a desire for dance halls and cinema. Jennifer Redmond argued that this interpretation was used to construct young, single female migrants as 'sinful', rejecting of both their national and Catholic identity and proper role as future wife and mother.⁷ These themes were seen in the reports of the Commission on Emigration, which also touched on the economic opportunities for women in Ireland, noting that whilst employment in domestic service was available in Ireland, it carried a lower status than similar employment in England. A wider range of opportunities was available in England including factory and office work and opportunities for professional training in nursing.⁸

Recent scholarship has moved beyond the reasons for female emigration to an exploration of the migration experience and the ways in which young Irish women leaving home for very different lives often in industrial cities in Britain reconciled their Irish identity with their new environment.⁹ Bronwen Walter has extended this approach to look at the impact a specific group of female migrants (domestic servants) may have had in shaping the culture of their host society – an issue which has previously been unremarked and unconsidered.¹⁰

⁶ Travers, 'There was nothing for me there', pp.152-155.

⁷ Redmond, 'Sinful singleness', p.461.

⁸ Travers, 'There was nothing for me there', p.164.

⁹ See, for example, Breda Grey, *Women and the Irish Diaspora* (London, 2004); Bronwen Walter, *Outsiders Inside: Whiteness, Place and Irish Women* (London 2001); Mary Muldowney, *The Second World War and Irish Women, An Oral History* (Dublin, 2007).

¹⁰ Bronwen Walter, 'Strangers on the inside: Irish women servants in England, 1881', *Immigrants and Minorities*, 27, 2 (2009), pp.279-299.

This chapter is not primarily concerned with lived experience but focuses instead on policy aspects. Despite McQuaid's clear prioritisation of 'women and girls' as the primary focus for the CSWB's work with emigrants, in practice, as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, most of the discourse on policy for Irish migrants was not explicitly gendered but based on an underlying assumption that Irish migrants were young, single, working class and male.¹¹ The services offered by the CSWB were also not gendered but offered to male and female emigrants. These services were strongly influenced by the methods used by existing 'moral welfare' organisations, such as the secular National Vigilance Association (NVA), although these generally targeted their services at lone female travellers.¹² The CSWB Emigrant Section adopted the model of a small paid staff supported by a larger volunteer force and followed the established methods of 'befriending' travellers at points of arrival and departure to offer support and advise on suitable accommodation. The major difference was that, for the CSWB, the safeguarding of religion was at least as important as moral welfare.¹³ Thus, the main task was to obtain details of each migrant's future address in Britain so that these could be passed on to the Catholic parish at their destination. This reflected McQuaid's assessment that the best means of preventing moral or social problems in England was through the maintenance of Catholic belief and practice and his belief that English parishes would contact newly arriving emigrants to draw them in to the life of their new local parish.

¹¹ See, for example, Robert Culhane, 'Irish Catholics in Britain', *The Furrow*, 1, 8 (1950), pp.387-414; Mathias Bodkin, 'The Irish in Britain', *The Furrow*, 5, 4 (1954), pp.209-240; Desmond Fisher, 'The Irishman in Britain', *The Furrow*, 9, 40 (1958), pp.230-235.

¹² Richard Phillips, 'Unsexy geographies: Heterosexuality, respectability and the Travellers' Aid Society', *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 5, 2 (2006), pp.163-190.

¹³ CSWB Committee of Management Agenda, 20 August 1942. McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XIX/1a, DDA.

The CSWB were also interested in ensuring the suitability of employment in Britain for Irish emigrants. Here their concerns went beyond the sexual propriety or respectability aspects that were the focus of the NVA. The CSWB was at least as interested in assuring itself that any position offered to an Irish person would afford opportunity for the full practice of the Catholic faith. Although this was an issue which affected both male and female migrants, it was in respect of females that the CSWB was most diligent. Females were seen as most at risk as many went to positions in domestic service in non-Catholic households where the hours of work, and their employer's ignorance of, or antipathy towards Catholic religious practice could make regular Mass attendance difficult. Similar problems were envisaged for women working as nurses in English hospitals where shift patterns could have the same effect.¹⁴ The CSWB followed the NVA approach of approving lodgings and supported the opening of hostel accommodation for women and girls by the Sisters of Mercy in their central Dublin convent premises.¹⁵

As discussed in Chapter 1, the visit of H.J.A. Gray, the CSWB's qualified social worker, to England in 1943 confirmed the view that 'irreligion and immorality' were the major risks to Irish migrants. Many of Gray's recommendations, such as the use of the Legion of Mary in England to support newly arrived migrants and the secondment of Irish priests to English parishes, were implemented during the 1950s, but he made no specific recommendations for work with female migrants in England.¹⁶ However, the particular circumstances of the war years made welfare policy to support industrial

¹⁴ Correspondence in McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XIX/1a, DDA.

¹⁵ Ibid.; CSBW Committee of Management Agenda, 20 August 1942. McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XIX/1a, DDA.

¹⁶ H.J.A. Gray, Report on Conditions of Irish Catholic Immigrants in Britain, May 1943; DDA, McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XIX/1a.

production a priority for the English government. I will now consider an example of the intersection between British industrial welfare policy and the specific needs of Irish female migrants and the service that was provided in response to this – the Selly Oak Irish Girls’ Club.

Selly Oak Irish Girls’ Club – the first Irish ‘welfare’ centre?

The Selly Oak club is an example (the only one found) where individuals from agencies in England identified a specific ‘Irish’ issue and responded to it themselves through an existing policy framework. During the Second World War increasing production in essential war industries was dependent on the state’s ability to transfer workers to industrial locations. This deployment of labour was achieved through the transferred workers scheme. Many workers were moved internally within Britain but Irish labour formed a key component.¹⁷ Life for transferred workers in lodgings or hostels was depressing and many returned home, thus reducing industrial output. To counter this, the Ministry of Labour made funds available for the provision of amenities for transferred workers to be provided by organisations such as the Red Cross.¹⁸ In Birmingham, a major centre of war industry production, accommodation for transferred workers was provided through billeting with private householders. Club facilities for them were organised separately, funded and overseen by the

¹⁷ A. V. Judges, *Irish Labour in Great Britain, 1939-1945*, Official Histories (Civil), Manpower Section. Cabinet Papers, PRO/CAB102/398, TNA.

¹⁸ Ministry of Labour and National Service, *Report by the Commissioner for Man-Power Survey*, Sir William H Beveridge, KCB – with Annexed Memoranda, October 1940. Cabinet Papers, CAB/67/8/84, TNA; and *War Workers Clubs, 1943-45*; Trades Union Congress Papers, MSS.292/147.66/3, University of Warwick, Modern Records Centre (hereafter MRC).

Ministry of Labour but provided by a range of other agencies including the Red Cross.¹⁹

In 1942, the Ministry of Labour reported that there were 5,234 transferred war workers from Ireland in Birmingham – 1,585 female and 3,649 male. Clubs to provide social activities alongside practical facilities such as baths, laundries and canteens had already been set up for war workers but it was noticed that the Irish did not make use of these. Demonstrating the way in which Catholicism was seen as integral to Irish identity and the meeting of social and welfare needs, in 1943 the Ministry of Labour approached the Birmingham Archdiocese to be its partner in provision for Irish women.²⁰ The lead in implementing this was taken by Mrs Helen Murtagh, a Birmingham Councillor and Chair of the Maternity and Child Welfare Committee who also acted as voluntary advisor on social welfare to the Archbishop of Birmingham.²¹ The Ministry of Labour data showed that 99 per cent of Irish workers were living in Selly Oak, so this area was identified as the appropriate site for an Irish girls' club. Initially, Mrs

¹⁹ War Workers Clubs, 1943-1945; Trades Union Congress Papers, MSS.292/147.66/3, MRC.

²⁰ Letter to Mrs Murtagh from Winifred Cavanagh, Ministry of Labour Welfare Officer for Birmingham, 17 December 1943. Williams Papers, Correspondence: Murtagh, Mrs Helen 1942-46, AP/C28/45, BAA. No specific facilities were commissioned for Irish men, despite there being greater numbers of Irish men than women amongst the war workers.

²¹ Mrs Murtagh had trained as a Public Health nurse and was married to a consultant anaesthetist. She was from a middle-class family of independent manufacturers who had been settled in Edgbaston for two generations. Her husband, Bernard, was the son of an Irish immigrant from County Mayo and an English-born mother whose parents also originated from Co. Mayo. Bernard's father was a provisions merchant, the family lived in Edgbaston and had a live-in servant. Bernard attended St. Philip's Grammar School and Birmingham University Medical School. It is not clear whether Mrs Murtagh was born Catholic or converted on marriage. Mrs Murtagh provided welfare advice to the Archdiocese over a number of years and in 1951 was presented with the Papal Cross for her services to children. At national level, she served on the Care of the Child (Curtis) Committee from 1943 to 1945, was a member of the Central Training Council in Child Care, of the Area Committee for the Training of Nurses and the Birmingham Hospitals Board. She was a Birmingham Councillor from 1940 to 1949 during which time she served on the Public Health, Maternity and Child Welfare and Education Committees. Her husband does not appear to have been active in Catholic affairs. Information from: Census enumerator data 1871 to 1911; and *Catholic Herald*, 22nd August 1947; 29th June 1951 and 26th July 1951; available on line at: www.archive.catholicherald.co.uk (accessed 1 March 2012); 'Obituary Notices: BLS Murtagh', *British Medical Journal*, 11 October 1969, p.115.

Murtagh and Mrs Cavanagh (the Ministry of Labour Welfare Officer) were informed by both the Ministry of Labour and the city council that no property was available in the area and that the best that could be offered was a prefabricated hut on a vacant site. Not prepared to accept this, the two women walked the area street by street until they identified suitable premises that were, in fact, already owned by the council, having been purchased years earlier as part of a redevelopment scheme that had never been implemented. Mrs Murtagh negotiated an agreement under which the Ministry of Labour would cover the salaries of three paid staff (a Catholic priest to act as director, a female secretary-leader and a cook), and the council and the Archdiocese would fund the renovation of the building between them.²² The dilatoriness of the council in committing to its part of the funding threatened to derail the scheme until Mrs Murtagh wrote to the Public Works Department reminding them that the Ministry of Labour regarded the scheme as of 'great urgency' for the war effort. Transferred workers, she pointed out, 'cannot adequately recreate [sic] among themselves. If they could they would work better'. Furthermore, the scheme had the support of the Lord Mayor.²³ This combined appeal for the war effort and veiled threat to report the matter to the Lord Mayor had the desired effect. The work was done and the club established.

The club had two main objectives: firstly, the provision of social activities and general amenities; and, secondly, general welfare and case work. The club facilities included a 'wireless room', a card room, a canteen providing high tea

²² Note to File, Mrs Murtagh, 4 January 1943; Transcript of letter from Mrs Murtagh to Mrs Cavanagh, 27 December 1942; Transcript of letter from Mrs Murtagh to Mr Bevan, Public Works Department, Birmingham Corporation, 24 January 1943. Williams Papers, Correspondence: Murtagh, Mrs Helen 1942-1946, AP/C28/45, BAA.

²³ Transcript of letter from Mrs Murtagh to Mr Bevan, Public Works Department, Birmingham Corporation, 24 January 1943. Williams Papers, Correspondence: Murtagh, Mrs Helen 1942-46, AP/C28/45, BAA.

and light refreshments, bathroom and laundry facilities. An activities and social programme was offered which included dress making, keep fit, theatre trips and a regular Sunday afternoon Irish dance.²⁴ Reporting to the Ministry of Labour in 1944, after the club had been open for a year, Mrs Cavanagh, the Ministry Welfare Officer, judged it a success. Despite the fact that it was directed by a Catholic priest, it attracted 'Eire and Northern Ireland girls, Catholics and Protestants, [who] mingle happily.' Total membership since opening was 123, of whom 97 were current members. The fact that 25 of the 26 'lost' members, had failed to return to Birmingham after going home to Ireland for Christmas suggests that it did not completely fulfil the objective (set in Beveridge's Man-Power Survey) of reducing the loss of transferred workers through homesickness. The majority of the members were aged between 20 and 30 but there were also 10 women over 40. The atmosphere was 'sedate and respectable' with members attending around three nights per week – 'a very high frequency for an adult club'. Favoured activities were playing cards and singing round the piano. The club was distinguishable from others by the 'noise the members make' although there was 'no rowdyism'. The club was judged to have succeeded in attracting the Irish 'who were not being attracted by any of the other clubs'. The girls were 'steady and a good type', able to pay the 2/- per week subscription out of wages that averaged £3 to £3.10/- per week.²⁵

Based on Ministry of Labour figures recording 1,500 Irish women working as 'transferred workers' in Birmingham at this time, the club was attracting

²⁴ Report on the Selly Oak Irish Club, Mrs W. Cavanagh, Local Welfare Officer, Ministry of Labour, Birmingham Local Office, 11 April 1944. Williams Papers, Correspondence: Murtagh, Mrs Helen 1942-46, AP/C28/45, BAA.

²⁵ Report on the Selly Oak Irish Club, 11 April 1944. Williams Papers, Correspondence: Murtagh, Mrs Helen 1942-46, BAA. Mrs Cavanagh cannot be seen as a disinterested assessor as she commissioned the club and worked with Mrs Murtagh to set it up.

around 8 per cent of the total.²⁶ Mrs Cavanagh noted that the members were ‘steady and a good type’ which suggests that they were those with the confidence and social skills to enjoy a club environment. It may be that spending three nights per week at the club reduced the time and opportunity available to them for drifting into ‘immoral behaviour’ and its consequences (eg illegitimate pregnancy) but it is also likely that the women attracted to this type of club would have been at low risk of this anyway. However, welfare and case work was offered to women presenting in crisis who were not members. Mrs Cavanagh reported on one girl with a concealed pregnancy who went into labour during her night shift and then refused help from her landlady as she was ‘determined to wait until ... the Irish Club opened’. The reason given was that she feared other agencies would tell her family but the club would not. The warden summoned a local doctor and midwife and the baby was delivered at the club ‘without fuss’ after which ‘Mum and babe were transferred to hospital without any trace for club members to see’. Mrs Cavanagh reported two cases of illegitimate pregnancy helped through the club.²⁷ Birmingham Corporation figures recorded 75 illegitimate births to Irish women out of a total of 898 (8 per cent) in 1942.²⁸ Assuming the level was similar in 1943/4 (the period covered by Mrs Cavanagh’s report), the impact of the club in providing support to this group appears to have been small.

Maintaining funding for the club was a constant problem. Mrs Murtagh and Mrs Cavanagh between them managed to balance the books through a

²⁶ Confidential memorandum from Ministry of Labour Birmingham Regional Office, 20 December 1943. Williams Papers, Correspondence: Murtagh, Mrs Helen 1942-46, AP/C28/45, BAA.

²⁷ Report on the Selly Oak Irish Club, 11 April 1944. Williams Papers, Correspondence: Murtagh, Mrs Helen 1942-46, AP/C28/45, BAA..

²⁸ Letter from Mrs Murtagh to McQuaid, 3 January 1943. Williams Papers, Correspondence: Murtagh, Mrs Helen 1942-46, AP/C28/45, BAA.

combination of funding from the Ministry of Labour, the Birmingham Lord Mayor's Fund and the Archdiocesan Welfare Funds. Repeated attempts to get contributions from firms employing Irish women were unsuccessful – the companies arguing that the women were well paid and, if they could afford to send money home (which many did), they could afford to pay for their own club.²⁹ The model of separating the responsibility for securing funds from the delivery of the club functions was a good one. Subsequent initiatives, including the Birmingham Irish Centre, struggled because the same individual was responsible for both functions and therefore struggled to deliver on either.³⁰ The club continued throughout the war years but ceased thereafter with the surrendering of the tenancy to Birmingham Corporation at the end of 1946.³¹

The need for the Selly Oak Irish Club was identified not from an assessment of the needs of the Irish in Birmingham per se but as a specific subset of the needs identified for transferred workers in general. The Irish became visible in this respect because they were known not to be using existing club facilities provided for transferred workers. Providing facilities for them was in the interests of the Ministry of Labour in order to prevent a drift home due to unhappiness with conditions of life in Birmingham. A subsidiary outcome from interventions of this type with women was the possibility of preventing 'immorality' and subsequent illegitimate pregnancy – something that not only removed a worker from productive service but would also be a drain on public assistance funds. The successful establishment and running of the club was largely due to the energy and determination of the two women who co-ordinated

²⁹ Letter to Archbishop Williams from Mrs Murtagh, 18 April 1944. Williams Papers, Correspondence: Murtagh, Mrs Helen 1942-46, AP/C28/45, BAA.

³⁰ See discussion in Chapter 3.

³¹ Letter to City of Birmingham Estates Department from Mrs Murtagh, 5 December 1946. Williams Papers, Correspondence: Murtagh, Mrs Helen 1942-46, AP/C28/45, BAA.

both the funding and services delivered by the club. Between them they had expertise in identifying policy and funding opportunities across the Ministry of Labour, the city council and a key voluntary agency (the Catholic Archdiocese). Mrs Murtagh was able to provide strong and effective leadership to the project, helped by her status within and knowledge of both the city council and the Archdiocesan welfare services. Both were prepared to persist in the face of apparent barriers such as the availability of suitable accommodation, lack of active co-operation by the council works department and the continual struggle for revenue funding. The Selly Oak club, therefore, provides an example where motivated people on the ground were able to use opportunities provided in the national policy framework to implement a local strategy. The project followed the approach of providing canteen and other facilities within a club environment that had been used for other 'transferred workers' under the Ministry of Labour scheme. The difference in this case, was that the club targeted a specific group, Irish girls and women, who had not used the 'generic' clubs. Mrs Cavanagh and Mrs Murtagh were successful in establishing a club that attracted the target clientele but whether it achieved the main aim of reducing a drift back to Ireland by workers unhappy with conditions in Birmingham is impossible to judge. No other initiatives specifically for Irish women arising from English governmental or Catholic church organisations were identified between 1940-1970.

Policy Development After World War II

Levels of emigration to Britain remained high for men and increased for women, particularly those aged under 25 years. Both the Irish Hierarchy, through McQuaid, and English voluntary welfare organisations lobbied the Irish government to restrict emigration of unaccompanied minors and regulate employment agencies. These demands were driven by persistent fears that young female migrants were being lured into prostitution in England. McQuaid also requested that details of all migrants, as recorded on Irish travel permits, should be passed to the CSWB so that English parishes could be informed.³²

There was some support from the Ministry of External Affairs but the proposals were ultimately rejected by the government after the Ministry of Justice recommended that restricting emigration would infringe the rights of individuals and that regulation of employment agencies was neither feasible nor necessary.³³

After the requirement for British travel permits was withdrawn in 1946, the role of Dublin as the port of embarkation for Britain for all those recruited to war industries ceased thus removing the unique role of the CSWB in supporting emigrants at the point of departure. It was also becoming clear that Catholic parishes in Britain did not have the resources to make contact with emigrants arriving in their area. The CSWB continued to offer its 'befriending service' at the stations and port and to use this as the main source of destination details which it continued to pass to English parishes. They also continued to make enquiries regarding suitability of employment and to follow up 'special cases',

³² Travel permits issued by the Irish government were required between 1943 and 1952, see NESC, *Economic and Social Implications of Emigration*, p.58.

³³ Letter from William P. Fay, Assistant Secretary, Department of External Affairs to the Secretary, Department of Justice, 29 October 1952. Department of the Taoiseach, Irish Labour, Emigration, s11582E, NAI.

where there were concerns about welfare, or religious practice, with parishes in England.³⁴

Once the limitations of the Dublin-based CSWB to co-ordinate support for emigrants became apparent, McQuaid looked more to encouraging interventions in England. In 1953, he was the driving force in the establishment of the Irish Episcopal Committee for Emigrants to which he provided strategic, management and administrative support although he was not formally a member.³⁵ Under the auspices of this committee a number of initiatives were set up over the 1950s to 1960s. These included expansion of Legion of Mary work in England with Irish migrants, regular missions by Irish priests and religious in English parishes with high numbers of Irish, the Irish Emigrant Chaplaincy (through which Irish priests were seconded to work with emigrants in English parishes) and ‘special’ initiatives for groups hard to include in existing parish structures (the Hotel Workers Chaplaincy and the Labour Camp Chaplaincy). The policies, objectives and activities of these groups were not gendered. However, particular concerns about Irish women were recorded in their reports. As had been the case since Gray’s visit to Britain in 1943, concerns about immorality and irreligion predominated.

The behaviour of some Irish women in Britain challenged the Irish ideal of female purity so cherished by the Irish state and Catholic church.³⁶ A recurring theme was the involvement of Irish women in prostitution and cohabitation with coloured men.³⁷ English Legion of Mary branches which had chosen work with

³⁴ Annual Reports of the CSWB, Emigrant Section, 1955-1969. McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XIX/4ac and 5ac, DDA.

³⁵ Memorandum on Irish Emigrants in England and Wales (undated). McQuaid Papers, Emigrants’ Welfare 3, Irish Episcopal Commission, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

³⁶ Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish Society, 1800-1940* (Cambridge, 2007), pp.194-196.

³⁷ Letter from Hubert Daly to Frank Duff, 17 July 1954, Legion of Mary Papers, DDA.

‘street girls’ as their particular mission reported the high proportion of Irish girls involved and that they were concentrated at the lower end of the trade – on the streets or ‘in Hyde Park’ rather than ‘flats in Mayfair’.³⁸ The hotels where many Irish girls worked as chambermaids were also identified as ‘dangerous to morals’ in that they encouraged lapsation from mass attendance and ‘worse’ - prostitution. Some hotels were believed to be little better than brothels.³⁹

The Hotel Chaplaincy scheme was initiated by the Irish hierarchy in 1957, after the need for work with this group had been identified to McQuaid by priests working in London’s West End. Under the management of the Columban Fathers in London, three chaplains were seconded to work with hotels across London. Although the chaplaincy reports do not specifically mention Irish girls working as prostitutes they note that the hotel environment placed a ‘strain’ on faith due to ‘open commercialisation’ of ‘sin’. The approach taken by the chaplains was essentially one of ‘prevention’ of both immorality and irreligion through the provision of suitable activities to occupy time and encourage religious observance. These included a social guild and sodalities to encourage adherence to the sacraments. The chaplains made pastoral visits to hotels to offer support to Irish workers (male and female) on a one to one basis. The scheme, like most of the church-sponsored interventions for the Irish in Britain, was based on belief that making individuals ‘apostolic’, in the sense of being adherent to and active in the practice of the Catholic faith, would provide ‘the greatest protection’ for them.⁴⁰ It is difficult to assess the impact of this scheme although subsequent reports indicate the low numbers of Irish

³⁸ Letter from Hubey Daly to Frank Duff, 21 July 1954, Legion of Mary Papers, DDA.

³⁹ Brady, Patrick, ‘The Irish in London: Correspondence’, *The Furrow*, 5, 8 (1954), pp.527-530.

⁴⁰ Boland, A.P., ‘The Hotel Chaplain Scheme’, *The Furrow*, 10, 9 (1959), pp.579-581.

employees making contact with the chaplains and that those who did were likely to be 'strong Catholics' already.⁴¹

The number of Irish women engaged in prostitution was also noticed by a sociologist, Richard Hauser. His research was on criminality in London but within this he noticed two Irish groups – women working as prostitutes and criminal offending by young men from industrial schools. He made suggestions for work with these groups to both the Dublin Archdiocese and the Irish Association of Social Workers (IASW). Noting that most of the Irish prostitutes, and a large proportion of their pimps, were Catholic he suggested outreach work to be undertaken by nuns 'not necessarily dressed as nuns'. His suggestions were dismissed by McQuaid, who refused to work with the IASW on the grounds that they were 'inchoate', and no policy initiatives resulted.⁴²

The nature of many working environments in which men and women were brought in close proximity was regarded as an opportunity for immorality by Catholic agencies. A particular risk in this respect was public transport work, where a large number of Irish women worked as bus conductresses. The nature of the work led to the conductress and driver spending long periods of time together and irregular relationships could result. It was said to be not uncommon to hear of a 'busman' with three children by an Irish girl.⁴³ Transport Workers Guilds were set up to discourage immorality and encourage religion but, as

⁴¹ Report of Camp and Hotel Chaplains Scheme, 1959. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 3, General Correspondence 1959, AB8/B/XXIX/a21, DDA; Report of Irish Emigrant Chaplains' Conference, London, January 1968. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 3, General Correspondence 1968-1971, AB8/B/XXIX/a15, DDA.

⁴² Richard Hauser, 'Hypothesis of Preliminary Action Research for the Irish Problem', Centre for Group Studies, London, 1963; and letter from Barrett to McQuaid, 23 January 1963. McQuaid Papers, CSWB, Emigrants Section, Richard Hauser, AB8/B/XIX, DDA.

⁴³ Hopkins, Eugene, 'Comment on 'Irish Catholics in Britain' by Robert Culhane', *The Furrow*, 1, 8 (1950): p. 400.

usual, we cannot estimate the impact of these or the extent to which they changed behaviour, if at all.

The Catholic church was clear that the responsibility for maintaining 'holy purity' lay with 'the Irish girl' because her behaviour would dictate 'whether sin [was] to be committed or not'.⁴⁴ Both public houses and dancehalls were identified as providing opportunities for sin and were to be avoided. Unsuitable accommodation, such as 'rooms over fried-fish shops' also contributed to immorality.⁴⁵ Hostels for Catholic girls and women had been established in a number of cities in England from the late nineteenth century on. These followed the same pattern of 'preventive' work seen in Ireland, by providing accommodation in which the behaviour of young women could be regulated and kept under surveillance.⁴⁶ Amongst priests working with the Irish in Britain, there was divergence of opinion as to whether the provision of extensive hostel accommodation for young women was the best preventive approach. Whilst some argued that in 'digs' even 'good girls' could easily go astray, others countered that the best prevention lay in ensuring the active belief and practice of faith since if a girl were 'good and apostolick [sic] there [was] no danger that she would stoop [to extramarital sex] and if she [were not] nothing in the world would stop her'.⁴⁷ The risks to young women were therefore seen as broadly similar to those in Ireland but on a greater scale. The solution in England could lie in encouraging self-regulation rather than attempting to keep young women under surveillance.

⁴⁴ *A Catholic Handbook for Irish Men and Women Going to England* (Dublin, 1955).

⁴⁵ Hopkins, 'Comment on Irish Catholics in Britain', p.400.

⁴⁶ The Sisters of Charity hostel in Birmingham is an example, see 'Religious History: Religious Houses', *A History of the County of Warwickshire: Volume 7: The City of Birmingham* (1964), pp.403-405. For similar initiatives in Ireland, see: Luddy, *Prostitution in Ireland*, p.167.

⁴⁷ 'Dictabelt from Father Aedan McGrath to Father Connolly, January 1958'. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 1, 1939/1961, General Correspondence, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

Illegitimate pregnancy

From the inception of the Irish Free State in 1922 to the 1970s, official statistics for illegitimate births were low and remarkably constant at around 1,900 per year. It was a matter of pride to the State that these figures were lower than those for most other countries.⁴⁸ However, the officially recorded rates are likely to have been artificially low due to under registration of illegitimate births and the departure of single pregnant Irish women for Britain, with the intention of giving birth, and arranging adoption, there.⁴⁹ The departure of these women was driven not only by a desire to conceal their condition from family and neighbours but also their dissatisfaction with the facilities for unmarried mothers available in Ireland. After the abolition of the Poor Law unions in 1925, the former workhouses were redesignated 'County Homes' and provided one source of support for the unmarried mother and her child, funded by central government and the local authorities. However, the government was keen to remove provision for unmarried mothers from these homes to private institutions run by nuns. Around six such institutions were established across the country between the 1920s and 1950s, along with a Dublin institution, the Regina Coeli hostel in Dublin run by a lay religious organisation, the Legion of Mary.⁵⁰ In addition, during the twentieth century the Magdalen asylums, established to provide rehabilitation for penitent prostitutes, expanded to include preventive work with unmarried mothers who were regarded as at risk of drifting into prostitution.⁵¹ Regimes in these institutions were harsh. Although there was no

⁴⁸ Maria Luddy, 'Unmarried mothers in Ireland, 1880-1973', *Women's History Review*, 20, 1 (2011), p.113.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.113; Paul Michael Garrett, *Social Work and Irish People in Britain* (Bristol, 2004), pp.31-35.

⁵⁰ Luddy, 'Unmarried mothers in Ireland', p.115.

⁵¹ Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish Society*, p.114.

legal mechanism for enforced detention, women were expected to remain in the homes for a period of around two years until such time as they had been trained for and placed in some employment which would enable them to contribute to the upkeep of their child in a foster home or nursery.⁵² The strict regime was a major driver of the emigration of pregnant single women, although this aspect was not acknowledged by agencies in Ireland until the 1950s.⁵³

In England, the Poor Law unions were abolished by the 1929 Local Government Act, which transferred responsibility for public hospital provision and public assistance to local authorities.⁵⁴ Destitute expectant mothers were entitled to support for rent and subsistence from the public assistance 'relieving officer'. Those of no fixed abode were admitted to public assistance institutions (former workhouses). Ante-natal care, delivery and post-natal care were managed through the public assistance hospital. Local authority Public Health Departments (the bodies responsible for delivering or commissioning public assistance services) could also fund placement in voluntary mother and baby homes for those women who needed them, provided the homes met defined standards and subject to regular Public Health Committee inspection.⁵⁵ From 1948, hospital services came under the National Health Service whilst responsibility for social care remained with the local authorities.⁵⁶ This element of localism (in both strategy and delivery of services) meant that there was never

⁵² Garrett, *Social Work and Irish People in Britain*, pp.24-25. Legal (as opposed to informal) adoption did not become an option in Ireland until the 1952 Adoption Act.

⁵³ Ibid., pp.28-33.

⁵⁴ Pat Thane, Memorandum submitted to the House of Commons' Health Committee inquiry: Social Care, October 2009, History and Policy <www.historyandpolicy.org/docs/thane_social_care.pdf> (5 March 2012).

⁵⁵ Mrs Helen Murtagh, typescript 'Rehabilitation of the Destitute Unmarried Mother, October 1942'. McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XIX/1a, DDA; and Thane, Memorandum to the House of Commons' Health Committee, October 2009.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

a British (or English) national approach to the care of the unmarried mother and her child.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the large number of pregnant, single young Irish women presenting to the Westminster Diocesan rescue services had been a cause of concern during the 1930s. Maria Luddy notes that illegitimacy rates in Ireland increased during the period of the Second World War and ascribes this largely to the travel restrictions imposed by both British and Irish governments.⁵⁷ However, some pregnant single Irish women still managed to get through the medical screening arrangements and travel to employment in England and others fell pregnant once there.⁵⁸ Thus it was during the war years that illegitimate pregnancy, and other problems that fell within the remit of public assistance provision, in Irish 'transferred workers' came to the attention of at least some local authorities. Jane Lewis and John Welshman note that the Leicestershire Council Maternity and Child Welfare Subcommittee funded a scheme to pay the expenses of returning Irish single mothers and their children to the Republic during the early 1940s. After the Ministry of Health Circular encouraging extended provision for mothers and children under five in 1943, the committee developed a policy of providing accommodation for all unmarried mothers, funding foster placements for their children and supporting the salary of a social worker employed by the moral welfare association.⁵⁹

The approach of one English local authority, Birmingham, can be reconstructed in some detail and is the only one that can be linked across the records of the authority, the local Catholic diocese, the Irish government and the

⁵⁷ Luddy, 'Unmarried mothers in Ireland', p. 113.

⁵⁸ Judges, *Irish Labour*, p.38.

⁵⁹ Lewis, Jane and John Welshman. 'The issue of never married motherhood in Britain, 1920-1970'. *Social History of Medicine*, 10 (1997), p.407.

Dublin Archdiocese. The importance of Birmingham as a location for war industries and the resulting influx of 'transferred workers' to staff them has been discussed above. Although the British travel and work permit system was intended to ensure that Irish workers coming to Britain were fit and suitable for employment, Birmingham Corporation Public Health Department noted a rise in the number of Irish 'war workers' who presented to services funded through public assistance. These 'undesirables' included 'unmarried mothers, immoral men and women, prostitutes, venereal disease cases, the mentally deficient, neurotics and tuberculosis cases'.⁶⁰ The lead on removing these undesirables from Birmingham, and discouraging others from coming, was taken by Mrs Helen Murtagh, the chair of the maternity and welfare subcommittee and voluntary advisor on welfare to the Birmingham Archdiocese. Her role in this area appears to be one she assumed for herself rather than one she was appointed to. However, she was so well regarded by the Archbishop of Birmingham that he recommended to the English hierarchy that each diocese should appoint a moral welfare worker who should be not only a trained social worker but also a 'trained nurse and midwife' and a 'public health visitor who knows how to deal with local authorities', a specification clearly based on Mrs Murtagh but not one which other dioceses would have found easy to replicate, since individuals with such a background would have been in short supply.⁶¹ Although Mrs Murtagh's interest in repatriation extended to all 'public assistance cases' from Ireland, her main focus and expertise lay in the unmarried mother and her child. Her view was, that to set up a successful repatriation scheme, 'a very good

⁶⁰ Letter from Mrs Helen Murtagh to Archbishop Williams, 30 April 1944. Williams Papers, Correspondence: Murtagh, Mrs Helen, 1942-46, AP/C28/5, BAA.

⁶¹ 'Catholic rescue work nationally co-ordinated', *Catholic Herald*, 10 December 1943, p.5.

bridgehead with Dublin' must be built.⁶² Although repatriation schemes were either already in operation (Westminster) or set up during the war (Leicestershire), Mrs Murtagh is the only representative of a British local authority (or voluntary welfare organisation for that matter) who is on record as having visited Ireland and attempted to establish co-ordinated working between the British authority and its counterparts in Dublin. As Garrett has shown, repatriation schemes for unmarried mothers dated back to the 1930s and, in general, seem to have been driven by English voluntary moral welfare societies rather than by local government public health and public assistance departments. Whilst the voluntary agencies may have been concerned about the welfare of young Irish women coming to Britain with concealed pregnancies, they were also concerned about the practical implications for their own workload, given that they received no funding for casework with this group. Where local authorities became involved (as in the cases of Birmingham and Leicestershire) there was a clear link to the drain on public assistance funds that these women represented.⁶³

Mrs Murtagh visited Dublin in August 1942, with letters of introduction from the Auxilliary Bishop of Birmingham to McQuaid and from the Lord Mayor of Birmingham to his counterpart in Dublin. From these introductions she was able to arrange meetings not only with these individuals but also the Dublin Medical Officer of Health, the Taoiseach, the Minister for Justice and the Minister for External Affairs. Her objective was to establish an effective

⁶² Helen Murtagh, Report to His Grace Archbishop Williams of a discussion with his Grace Archbishop McQuaid on social problems arising between Eire and Great Britain, with particular reference to the unmarried mother and her child, undated (describes her visit to Dublin in August 1942). Williams Papers, Correspondence: Murtagh, Mrs Helen, 1942-46, AP/C28/45, BAA.

⁶³ Letter to Archbishop Williams from Mrs Murtagh, 30 April 1944. Williams Papers, Correspondence: Murtagh, Mrs Helen, 1942-46, AP/C28/45, BAA.

repatriation scheme for Irish unmarried women arriving in Birmingham pregnant by a 'putative father...in Eire' and also for destitute Irish women who were 'sick...and wished to return to Eire'. Her reasons for prioritising these groups above others were not stated but may have reflected the type of cases presenting to the public health department and/or the Catholic voluntary organisations.⁶⁴

The approach to unmarried mothers in Birmingham was based on the belief that keeping the mother and baby together would give the 'child the best chance in life'. This was achieved through an initial period of three months in a mother and baby home followed by transfer of mother and child to hostel accommodation. There were a variety of homes and hostels in Birmingham, all eligible for public funding provided certain conditions were met. This included denominational provision, within which Catholic facilities, staffed by nuns, were available. Once in the hostel, the mother was expected to undertake part-time work, deemed 'suitable' by her health visitor, while the baby was cared for in the hostel nursery. At the age of six months, the nuns and health visitor (but not the mother) would decide the baby's future. The options at this point were for the baby to be placed in a suitable Catholic foster home, a residential nursery or completely in the care of the mother. Adoption was not a routinely considered option and no Catholic baby would 'proceed to adoption without the express permission of the Bishop following the most careful probing of the mother's

⁶⁴ Helen Murtagh, Report to His Grace Archbishop Williams ... with particular reference to the unmarried mother and her child, undated (describes her visit to Dublin in August 1942). Williams Papers, Correspondence: Murtagh, Mrs Helen, 1942-46, AP/C28/45, BAA; and letter to McQuaid from Mrs Murtagh (undated, probably late 1942 from place in file). McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 1 1939/1961, General Correspondence, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

circumstances and motive.’⁶⁵ The reasons for the avoidance of adoption as a routine option for the future of these children were not given. They may simply reflect the stated principle, discussed above, that keeping mother and baby together was the best course for the child’s subsequent development. The policy appears to have been applied by the local authority to children of any denomination or none but in respect of Catholic babies, and the Catholic agencies, there may have been an additional objective to avoid these children being placed with non-Catholic couples. The Birmingham approach was very different from that in Ireland. Rapid rehabilitation and keeping mother and child together were the norm in Birmingham compared to a period of lengthy rehabilitation extending, in many cases for up to two years, after the baby had been boarded out with foster carers, in Ireland.⁶⁶

While Mrs Murtagh was keen to repatriate Irish girls to avoid their becoming a charge on Birmingham public assistance funds, she also wished to assure herself that they would be returning to services with similar approaches and standards. In this she was disappointed. During her visit, Mrs Murtagh visited the hospitals providing obstetric care to destitute women, the Department of Health Visitors, the Regina Ceoli Home for Mothers and Babies (run by the Legion of Mary), the Manor House Castlepollard for Unmarried Mothers (run by the Sacred Heart Sisters) and the Dublin slums. Writing to the chair of the CSWB committee of management after her visit, Mrs Murtagh did not criticise the Irish system directly but she did note some points of good practice, as she saw it, which differed widely from the practice in Ireland. Thus, while she

⁶⁵ Helen Murtagh, typescript headed ‘Rehabilitation of the destitute unmarried mother’, written for the Chair of the CSWB Committee of Management, October 1942. McQuaid Papers, Emigrants’ Welfare, 1, 1939/1961, General Correspondence, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

⁶⁶ Garrett, *Social Work and Irish People in Britain*, p.28.

acknowledged that women with a first illegitimate child must be made to understand ‘the grave position [they] have got themselves into’, they also needed to get back to work as soon as possible to provide for the child. Mrs Murtagh was clear that women who were ‘reinstated in the occupation they most desire’ very rarely went on to have a second illegitimate child. There was also criticism for large institutions which ‘have collected these mothers and babies and seem to have produced a community of depressed and despairing women absolutely unemployable’.⁶⁷ In her view, a thirty-bed home was optimal in size and a viable economic proposition. This contrasted sharply with the size of institutions in Ireland – the Regina Coeli hostel provided accommodation for 170 women and up to 150 babies and the Castlepollard home could accommodate up to 200 women.⁶⁸ Writing to McQuaid, Mrs Murtagh acknowledged that the Regina Coeli provided ‘merciful work’ but could not avoid contrasting its dismal facilities with the ‘light nurseries where every mother can stay with her baby’ in the Catholic hostel in Birmingham.⁶⁹ Mrs Murtagh was clear that the Irish government should fund the care of ‘destitute cases’ in voluntary homes and urged the CSWB to apply for a ‘per capita grant’. In reality, Mrs Murtagh’s approach to unmarried mothers and their babies followed a different framework to that in Ireland and the economic conditions in Ireland made much of her advice inapplicable. Employment opportunities for women without the added problem of a history of illegitimate pregnancy were few enough and were a major driver of female emigration to Britain. In

⁶⁷ Murtagh, ‘Rehabilitation of the destitute unmarried mother’.

⁶⁸ Finola Kennedy, *Frank Duff: A Life Story* (London, 2011), p.93; <www.castlepollard.ie/History_page.html> (17 September 2012).

⁶⁹ Letter from Mrs Murtagh to McQuaid, undated (probably late 1942). McQuaid Papers, Emigrants’ Welfare 1, 1939/1961, General Correspondence, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

addition, neither the organisation of public assistance nor funding for it would have allowed adoption of her methods, even had the Irish voluntary agencies wished to do so.

Although unsuccessful in achieving any change of policy towards unmarried mothers in Ireland, she did succeed in agreeing an administrative process for repatriation of public assistance cases from Birmingham. At the time, the majority of single pregnant Irish women in Birmingham were initially identified by factory welfare officers. After referral to the local authority public health department, care would be provided through the Catholic mother and baby home and repatriation would not be arranged until the baby was three months old, to give the new mother 'time to adjust' and 'obtain spiritual peace'. Once ready to return, Mrs Murtagh would inform the Irish Department for Health Visitors and the Catholic Social Welfare Bureau. These bodies would liaise with an appropriate 'Protection Society' to ensure arrangements were in place for the reception and long term care of the woman and her child.⁷⁰ Once these arrangements were agreed, the 'Protection Society' would notify Mrs Murtagh that the 'case' could be sent over. The Birmingham mother and baby home would ensure that the babies were 'warmly clad and have sufficient napkins for changes during the long journey' and that the mother had 'a little money...for food', full instructions for her journey and was in possession of the baby's baptismal certificate. It was hoped that the Irish protection societies would

⁷⁰ The two 'protection societies' in Dublin at the time were the Catholic Protection and Rescue Society of Ireland and the St Patrick's Guild. Both organisations were founded to arrange Catholic foster homes for illegitimate children as an alternative to the services offered by Protestant agencies. St Patrick's Guild was founded by Mary Cruice in 1910. It did not provide mother and baby homes but took in babies for fostering or adoption at its Infant Hospital in Temple Hill. The Child Protection and Rescue Society of Ireland was founded in 1913. Information from: <<http://www.adoptionrightsalliance.com/spg.htm>> and <<http://www.cunamh.com/index.php?page=about-us>> (17 September 2012).

reimburse the organisation that had provided care in England, 'where possible'.⁷¹ Mrs Murtagh had the active collaboration of the Birmingham public health department in ensuring that these arrangements, including the check on baptismal certificates' were in place. This was facilitated not only by the fact that Mrs Murtagh's role spanned both the council and voluntary sector but also because the Birmingham Medical Officer of Health at the time, Dr H. P. Newsholme, was himself a recent Catholic convert and actively involved in Catholic social and moral welfare work.⁷²

Mrs Murtagh was concerned at the poor standards of repatriation schemes operating elsewhere and was particularly scathing of the approach of the Westminster Diocesan Crusade of Rescue in this respect. She criticised this body for sending women back to Ireland close to or soon after confinement, with no liaison with the Irish organisations to ensure that plans for ongoing care were in place. In fact, the Westminster Crusade of Rescue usually did no more than send a telegram to a protection society in Dublin before dispatching the mother and child with no money or provisions and frequently with the baby unbaptised. There were also concerns about the professionalism of the woman in charge of case work at the Westminster Crusade as the letters she wrote about individual women had 'such a spiteful undercurrent'. The observation that Catholic women involved in rescue work had a tendency to 'spitefulness' towards their less fortunate sisters made Mrs Murtagh hesitant to recommend delegation of

⁷¹ Ibid; and letter from Mrs Murtagh to McQuaid (undated, probably late 1942). McQuaid Papers, Emigrants' Welfare 1, 1939/1961, General Correspondence, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

⁷² Covering a speech given by Dr Newsholme to the Birmingham Catholic Cripples Care Society in 1940, the *Catholic Herald* noted that he had been received into the church a year previously (ie 1939), see 'Birmingham's Medical Officer on place of spiritual life in care of cripples', *Catholic Herald*, 15 March 1940; the *Catholic Herald* reported other speeches given by Dr Newsholme on social or moral issues over subsequent years, see, for example: 'Christian common-sense from Birmingham M.O.H.', *Catholic Herald*, 23 January 1942; and coverage of the 'Cambridge Sociology Conference', *Catholic Herald*, 24 July 1942; [all consulted at <www.archive.catholicherald.co.uk> (7 March 2012)].

case work to ‘advice bureau(x) with women to run [them] unless they have been tested.’ The Birmingham scheme therefore remained under Mrs Murtagh’s control.⁷³

From her reports, it appears that Mrs Murtagh would have liked to have seen the Birmingham approach and standards adopted by other repatriation schemes. However, as responsibility for provision for unmarried mothers lay at local authority level, there was no mechanism for achieving uniformity on a national basis.⁷⁴ There was no legal mechanism to enforce repatriation and we cannot tell from the available records what pressure was put on women to accept it or what other options were offered to them. We do not know what proportion of Irish women giving birth illegitimately were ‘public assistance’ cases or, of these, how many accepted repatriation. We also do not know what became of those repatriated, going as they did with a baby of three months’ old to a very different regime in Ireland which would probably have entailed permanent separation from the infant and a protracted period of rehabilitation in a convent-run home. The available records do not record what became of the Birmingham scheme after the war and the cessation of Ministry of Labour input.

By the 1950s, professional attitudes to unmarried mothers focussed on individual psychopathology, rather than misfortune, as the root cause of illegitimate pregnancy. Adoption was therefore increasingly favoured as the

⁷³Letter from Mrs Murtagh to McQuaid (undated, probably late 1942). McQuaid Papers, Emigrants’ Welfare 1, 1939/1961, General Correspondence, AB8/B/XXIX, DDA.

⁷⁴Lyndsey Earner-Byrne discusses Mrs Murtagh’s work on repatriation of Irish unmarried mothers in her book *Mother and Child: Maternity and Child Welfare in Dublin, 1922-1960* (Manchester, 2007), p.194. However, she misidentifies Mrs Murtagh as ‘a concerned Catholic social worker’ and misinterprets her as having a national role in conjunction with the Chief Medical Officer, identified by Earner-Byrne as ‘Dr Newsholme’. This appears to result from confusion of the Birmingham M.O.H. (Dr H P Newsholme) with whom Mrs Murtagh did work, and a previous Chief Medical Officer to the Local Government Board of England and Wales, Sir Arthur Newsholme who, in fact, retired in 1919. The LGB was abolished in 1919 and subsequent Chief Medical Officers were appointed by the Ministry of Health.

best plan for the baby's future.⁷⁵ Garrett has provided some insight into the case work of a repatriation scheme run by one English Catholic Rescue Society (not specifically identified for confidentiality reasons) during this period. The society described by Garrett co-ordinated repatriations with the Child Protection and Welfare Society in Ireland although it is not clear whether this co-ordination extended to include formal arrangements with the local authority in England.⁷⁶ The records indicate that despite there being no legal framework for repatriation and the fact that, under the 1948 British Nationality Act, Irish women were entitled to access services in Britain on the same basis as UK citizens, welfare advisors repeatedly gave their clients the impression that they had no entitlement and no viable options other than to accept repatriation. The 'undercurrent of spitefulness', detected by Mrs Murtagh in the Westminster case work, is also evident in these records in the form of gratuitously derogatory comments about the 'cases'. The welfare officers used threats to breach the women's confidentiality as further inducement to accept repatriation. Garrett concedes that some of the pressure to accept repatriation may have been driven by concerns of the Catholic agency regarding lack of Catholic families with which to place children in England. However, he also identifies thinking which harks back to an earlier view that Irish cases should not be a charge on British public funds – even though the legal framework by then allowed them to be exactly that. Cecil Barrett, who was director of both the CSWB and the Catholic Protection and Rescue Society of Ireland (CPRSI) from the mid-1950s, provided

⁷⁵ Lewis and Welshman, 'The issue of never-married motherhood in Britain', p.409.

⁷⁶ Garrett, *Social Work and Irish People in Britain*, pp.39-53. One of the cases quoted by Garrett notes the refusal of a hospital almoner to fund accommodation costs for an Irish unmarried mother, which suggests an ad hoc, case by case approach rather than an agreed process, as in the Birmingham scheme. The refusal was also probably illegal since at the time, 1958, the woman would have been entitled to care during confinement and afterwards at a mother and baby home under the 1948 National Assistance Act.

a summary of repatriation cases as appendices to CSWB annual reports from 1955 onwards. These indicate that throughout from 1955 to 1970, 140-180 Irish women per annum were repatriated through the CPRSI office in Dublin. Around two thirds were sent by the Westminster and Southwark Diocesan Crusades of Rescue, around 15 per cent came from Birmingham and the remainder from rescue societies in a range of English cities including Portsmouth, Leeds, Manchester, Northampton and Liverpool.⁷⁷

Garrett provides details of a scheme implemented by the London County Council during the 1950s and 1960s to find adoption placements in Ireland for the children of Irish mothers who had been placed in council long-term care. This is another example of the localism to be found in both policy and practice for unmarried mothers and children in care. The driver for this scheme was the need to close nursery facilities and, therefore, to find alternative placements for the displaced children. Garrett notes the willingness with which the council supported the identification of children with Irish ‘antecedents’, ‘relatives or connections’ as a sub-group of children to whom a specific policy could be applied – one that not only would facilitate placement with a Catholic family (Catholic foster or adoptive families were in short supply) but would also reduce the costs of childcare to the council.⁷⁸ Garrett records that by the mid-1960s, 298 children had been placed in Ireland whereas 233 children with Irish connections remained in council care. Of the latter group, the most commonly cited reason for not exploring placement in Ireland was that the child was only in short term care and/or discharge from care was already planned (132

⁷⁷ Barrett, Reports on Repatriation Work of Catholic Protection and Rescue Society of Ireland, 1955-1969; McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XIX/4ac and 5ac, DDA.

⁷⁸ Garrett, *Social Work and Irish People in Britain*, pp.63, 66. Barrett, Reports on Repatriation Work of Catholic Protection and Rescue Society of Ireland, 1955-1969; Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XIX/4ac and 5ac, DDA.

children). In 16 cases the child's parent(s) expressly did not want them sent to Ireland and the council had no grounds to override the parent's wishes.⁷⁹

The fact that policies for the care of the Irish unmarried mothers and their children lay at local authority level and/or within individual Catholic voluntary agencies (with or without a clear connection to the local public health department) makes it very difficult to reconstruct the approaches to this group across England, particularly as the records of voluntary agencies are usually not available to historians. Pat Thane has pointed out that some unmarried mothers lived in stable relationships and therefore they and their children, although the latter were counted as illegitimate, did not present either to public or voluntary agencies for care.⁸⁰ We do not know the proportion of Irish unmarried mothers in this category although as reports from priests working in England indicate that Irish couples where one or both parties were already married to someone else were a common feature of pastoral work, it likely applied to at least some. Approaches to unmarried motherhood by English agencies followed the 'rescue work' approach established in the late nineteenth century. It was broadly similar to that followed in Ireland, with a common view that 'first offenders' were more deserving of care and rehabilitation than 'repeaters'.⁸¹ Catholic agencies in England and Ireland therefore shared a common language and approach to unmarried mothers. Beliefs around entitlement to care, based on nineteenth century Poor Law rather than the current legal framework, were also shared on both sides of the Irish Sea. There seems to have been no disagreement between English and Irish agencies that the appropriate place to care for the unmarried

⁷⁹ Garrett, *Social Work and Irish People in Britain*, p.67.

⁸⁰ Pat Thane, 'Unmarried motherhood in twentieth-century England', *Women's History Review*, 20,1 (2011), p.14.

⁸¹ Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish Society*, pp.114-123, 200-201.

Irish mother and her child was in Ireland and arguments about ‘entitlement’ were used to justify this. As late as 1969, Father Owen Sweeney, a Dublin priest who had worked for many years with emigrants in England, wrote an article on the pastoral care of the unmarried mother in Ireland. He stated that ‘myths’ about care available in Ireland still drove Irish girls to seek help in England – ‘help which...they are not entitled to’.⁸² As noted above, Irish women were, in fact, ‘entitled’ but old ideas about entitlement and the need for removal (repatriation) of the ‘unentitled’ to a place where they were ‘entitled’ seem to have lingered well beyond the change in the legal framework.⁸³ The case notes presented by Garrett indicate that the welfare officers of at least one English agency misled Irish women about their entitlement and resorted to threats to breach their confidentiality if they did not co-operate with repatriation. At best this suggests a lack of supervision of case workers and at worst, complicity with this approach at senior levels in the organisation.

It is impossible to gauge the proportion of Irish unmarried mothers who presented to Catholic agencies in England. As noted above, those in stable relationships would not have sought such help and others may have avoided the Catholic agencies for alternatives such as the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child, which would not have foregrounded repatriation as the best option.⁸⁴ Irish priests writing on the subject certainly

⁸² Owen Sweeney, ‘The pastoral care of unmarried mothers’, *The Furrow*, 20, 10 1(969), pp. 543.

⁸³ Irish women were entitled to medical care under the 1948 National Health Services Act and local authority provision (including accommodation) under the 1948 National Assistance Act [Acts consulted at www.legislation.gov.uk (accessed 8 March 2012)].

⁸⁴ Thane, ‘Unmarried motherhood’, p.13.

gave anecdotal evidence of Irish women having their babies adopted by ‘non-Catholic families and homes’ but how widespread this was is not known.⁸⁵

‘Regular attenders at Mass and beloved by the patients they serve’⁸⁶ – Irish nurses in England

Whilst Irish women in Britain in general were seen as at risk of immorality and irreligion, one group, in particular, stood in stark contrast to this and their perceived adherence to religious belief and practice drew favourable comments from English and Irish observers. The image of the nurse in both England and Ireland was bound up with ideals of femininity including self-sacrifice and a ‘willingness to serve’ and the Irish Catholic church promoted nursing as ‘a tremendously fine vocation’.⁸⁷ After the inception of the NHS in 1948, there were persistent problems with recruiting and retaining nurses. The government and individual hospital boards put considerable effort into the presentation of nursing as an attractive career for young women. Recruitment within Great Britain was insufficient to meet service needs and Ireland offered an attractive additional source. Louise Ryan notes that large numbers of young Irish women were recruited into nursing in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s with the result that by the early 1970s, 12 per cent of British nursing staff was Irish-born.⁸⁸ Ryan’s oral history work with Irish nurses indicates that the ‘Irish nurse’ had a largely positive image in Britain, being associated with capacity for hard work, being

⁸⁵ Hopkins, ‘Comment on ‘Irish Catholics in Britain’ by Robert Culhane’, p.400.

⁸⁶ Newsclipping from the *Irish Independent*, 15 April 1955. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Recruitment of Irish Nurses –General File, B101/42, NAI.

⁸⁷ Gerard M Fealy, ‘The good nurse’: Visions and values in images of the nurse’, *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 46 (2004), p.649.

⁸⁸ Louise Ryan, ‘Becoming nurses: Irish women, migration and identity through the life course’. In *Gendering Migration: Masculinity, Femininity and Ethnicity in Post-War Britain*, Louise Ryan and Wendy Webster (eds.), pp.121-170. (Aldershot, 2008), p.123.

caring and able to communicate with patients sympathetically. Julia Hallam notes that in the 1940s-60s career options for women in Britain were limited with the choice for many young women restricted to teaching, nursing or secretarial and administrative work.⁸⁹ A survey of public attitudes in the 1960s indicated that teaching and secretarial work were seen as better career choices than nursing by a majority of respondents. Nursing was associated with hard, often menial work, long hours and low pay.⁹⁰ In Ireland career choices were even more limited which may have made the opportunity to train as a nurse in Britain a more attractive option for an Irish than a British school leaver. The attraction was increased by the fact that British hospitals paid student nurses during training and offered accommodation and board. The recruitment efforts of British hospitals included the production of glossy brochures stressing not only the standards of professional training on offer but also the comforts of the nurses' home and the attractions of the social activities available.⁹¹

As discussed in Chapter four, by 1953 the Irish government had established a policy of not providing funding for the care of Irish migrants in England.⁹² However, the Irish Embassy in London continued to have general consular responsibility for Irish citizens in Britain. This extended to a particular interest in Irish nurses, as evidenced by the maintenance of a specific file covering their recruitment to British hospitals. Press articles covering issues relating to Irish nurses were regularly collected and filed. The content of the 'Recruitment of

⁸⁹ Julia Hallam, 'Nursing the image: Popular fictions, recruitment and nursing identity, 1950-1975' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Warwick 1995), pp. 22,23.

⁹⁰ Ibid.,

⁹¹ Broomfield Hospital Brochure, 1959. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies - London, Recruitment of Irish Nurses - general file, B101/42, NAI.

⁹² 'Irish Community Trust Fund', Memorandum, December 1953. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies - London, Financial assistance from Irish Government towards Welfare of Irish in Britain - General Policy 1959-69, B100/19, NAI.

Irish Nurses' file reflects a desire to collect favourable reports of Irish nurses, to ensure that agencies recruiting girls from Ireland to nursing were not exploitative, and to protect the interests of young women coming to Britain to nurse.⁹³

The high regard in which Irish nurses were generally held in Britain was a matter of pride for the Irish government, the Irish hierarchy and Irish society generally. Any criticism of Irish nurses or suggestions that they were being exploited in Britain therefore elicited a strong response. In 1966 the *Hornsey Journal* published an article discussing 'an analysis of outcomes of nurse training' undertaken by Miss Redmond, matron of the Whittington Hospital in North London, a large employer of Irish nurses. Miss Redmond's study was reported as showing that Irish girls had lower qualifications on entry to training than British students. Moreover, although their entry qualifications were on a par with those of West Indian nursing students, the latter group did better in their training. Miss Redmond suggested that preference should, therefore, be given to West Indian applicants.⁹⁴

In response to this article, questions were raised in the Dail on the training of Irish nurses. Meanwhile, the Irish Centre in London advised the Irish hierarchy that fewer Irish girls were being accepted for State Registered Nurse training whilst more were doing 'a lower grade of nurse training' to become State Enrolled nurses. The Archbishop of Tuam issued a message to be read at masses in his diocese warning that girls were 'finding themselves in the position

⁹³ Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies - London, Recruitment of Irish Nurses - general file, B101/42, NAI.

⁹⁴ Press cutting from the *Hornsey Journal*, 25 November 1966. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies - London, Recruitment of Irish Nurses - General File, B101/42, NAI. Miss Redmond, 'An analysis of the progress of student nurses entering training at the Whittington Hospital since May 1960'. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies - London, Recruitment of Irish Nurses - General File, B101/42, NAI.

of wardmaids.’ The London Irish Centre felt that the poor performance of Irish girls in the selection test was not due to lack of education but to lack of familiarity with what the test entailed. Practical help was offered by the Marian Employment Agency which produced leaflets to help girls prepare for the selection test for distribution throughout Ireland.⁹⁵

The Irish Ambassador met with Miss Redmond to discuss the matter. They agreed that Irish girls with lower entrance qualifications might be over-represented amongst applicants for training in England, not because qualifications were generally lower in Ireland but because better qualified Irish girls obtained training places in Ireland. Miss Redmond agreed to remove her suggestion that preferential selection be extended to West Indian girls from the version of her paper to be published in the *International Nursing Review*.⁹⁶ Thus any criticism of Irish young women, their education or performance as student nurses was averted.

Conclusion

Throughout this period the lead in work with migrants was taken by the Irish hierarchy under the direction of McQuaid. Their approach was based on the belief that ‘irreligion and immorality’ were the major risk factors for social problems in Britain. This was understood as affecting all migrants – there was little attempt to identify groups at risk, other than those exposed to ‘sinful’ working environments. Interventions were in line with ‘preventive’ approaches

⁹⁵ Cutting from the *Irish Independent*, 7 February 1967. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Recruitment of Irish Nurses-General File, B101/42, NAI.

⁹⁶ Report of meeting between Irish Ambassador and Miss Redmond, 10 February 1967. Department of Foreign Affairs, Embassies – London, Recruitment of Irish Nurses-General File, B101/42, NAI.

already well established in Ireland – that is, attempting to strengthen religious belief and practice so that individuals would regulate their own behaviour, alongside the provision of social activities within a Catholic environment to reduce the opportunities for ‘falling into sin’. There was concern about why ‘good’ Irish girls went ‘bad’ in England but this was understood to result from exposure to the irreligious and immoral environment there rather than having any origin in Ireland. While the services followed well established patterns of preventive and pastoral work, the mechanism for delivery was innovative in allowing services to be supervised by one hierarchy (the Irish) in the territory of another (the English) in a manner which proved durable over several decades. These services all used priests for leadership and delivery. The lack of involvement of female religious in either policy setting or delivery is surprising given their role in female welfare in Ireland and the large numbers of them serving in England.⁹⁷

It was not until the 1960s that lack of social and life skills, particularly in those with lower education levels, was recognised as a cause of vulnerability which should be addressed through changes in the Irish education and parish systems rather than through interventions in England. Although this approach was endorsed by the Irish bishops in their 1967 Lenten Pastoral, it seems that little change to services in Ireland resulted.⁹⁸ The need for emigrant support declined in the 1970s as levels of emigration fell and the Emigrant Section of the CSWB was wound down. When emigration rose again in the 1980s, the lead on policy development was taken by the Irish government, which, as described above, had declined to engage with migrant welfare issues during the previous

⁹⁷ Yvonne McKenna, ‘Forgotten migrants: Irish women religious in England, 1930s to 1960s’. *International Journal of Population Geography*, 9 (2003), p.298.

⁹⁸ ‘Pastoral Letter of the Irish Hierarchy on Emigration’, *The Furrow*, 18, 5, (1967), pp.283-290.

phase of high emigration. However, the focus remained on initiatives outside Ireland, suggesting that the lessons of the earlier decades of emigration had not been learnt.⁹⁹

The British government did not see Irish migrants, male or female, as having any particular needs requiring a policy response. Rather, they saw them as ‘no different from anybody else’ and enshrined this in law through the 1948 British Nationality Act which defined the Irish in Britain as ‘not foreign’ and granted them similar rights and privileges to those of British citizens.¹⁰⁰

The Irish government declined to engage in emigrant welfare issues until 1969 when they proposed to make £10,000 available to support emigrant advice services. McQuaid considered that this ignored the experience of the CSWB that intending emigrants, particularly the ‘less responsible’ were not receptive to advice once they had decided (often on the spur of the moment) to leave for England and the proposal was not progressed.¹⁰¹

The English hierarchy had a policy position of fully integrating the Irish into English parishes and discouraged the establishment of parallel services specifically for them unless these were intended to facilitate integration.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Kate Kelly and Triona Nic Giolla Choille, ‘Listening and learning: experiences in an emigrant advice agency’, in Patrick O’Sullivan (ed.), *Irish Women and Irish Migration* (London, 1995), pp.171-174.

¹⁰⁰ Paul, ‘A case of mistaken identity’, pp.116-142.

¹⁰¹ Minutes of meetings between the CSWB and Department of Labour, 27 May 1969 and 3 June 1969. McQuaid Papers, Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, AB8/B/XIX/19g, DDA.

¹⁰² Cardinal Griffin, Trinity Sunday Pastoral Letter, 1955, quoted in Memorandum on Irish Emigrants in England and Wales (undated). McQuaid Papers, Emigrants’ Welfare, AB8/B/XXIX/a/3, DDA.

There was a range of services to support women with social problems available in England not only through the Catholic church but also other voluntary and statutory agencies. The issue of whether Irish women should access these or whether they required specific services (if only to help them understand what was available in England) was not explicitly debated at a strategic level (ie between the hierarchies and/or governments and voluntary agencies). However, there is evidence that for one group at least, pregnant single Irish women, voluntary Catholic welfare agencies in at least some dioceses had no wish to pursue a policy of integration, preferring instead to encourage repatriation.

In summary, the policy approach towards Irish female migrants, driven largely by the Irish Catholic church, was based on Catholicism as the defining feature of Irish female identity. This left little, if any, space for alternative constructions or experiences of Irishness.

Conclusion

This study has assessed whether Irish migrants across the period 1940 to 1972 were perceived as having particular welfare needs, the policy debates that arose about these needs both within and between organisations and the policies and services that resulted. This is an aspect of Irish migration that has not been the subject of sustained analysis before. In particular, this study has been innovative in mapping approaches to Irish migrants across organisations to assess the different interpretations of Irish migrant need and the extent and outcomes of inter-organisational collaboration.

Although levels of migration rose during the war and remained high throughout the 1950s, there had been appreciable net emigration in the preceding decades. During these years, British Catholic and secular welfare organisations had raised concerns about the number of young Irish women travelling to Britain alone and the numbers presenting with illegitimate pregnancy to British services. Whilst this had led to discussion between British agencies, the Irish hierarchy and the Irish government, little in the way of policies or dedicated services resulted prior to 1940. A structured approach did not emerge until the appointment of McQuaid to the Dublin episcopate. McQuaid's interest in emigrant welfare formed part of his overall objective of improving social services administration and delivery in Dublin. During the war years emigrants were very visible in Dublin as effectively all embarkation of those leaving for work in Britain was from Dublin. In setting up the Emigrant Section of the Catholic Social Welfare Bureau with the initial objective of providing for the 'care of women and girls', McQuaid was drawing on the

earlier concerns about the moral welfare of female migrants. The services initially provided by the CSWB were intended to support migrants during their stay in Dublin. The CSWB reproduced the methods of other moral welfare agencies (such as the British National Vigilance Association), added a religious element, through attempts to collect details of migrant destinations and pass these to parishes in England, and extended them to male as well as female emigrants. It is difficult to find evidence in the work of the CSWB that they provided any specific services targeted at 'women and girls'.

Lifting of wartime travel restrictions removed Dublin's pre-eminent position as the departure point for emigration. The CSWB had succeeded in contacting only around ten per cent of emigrants and most of these contacts had been through approaches from Legion of Mary volunteers at the stations or port. It had also become clear that English parishes did not have the resources to seek out arriving Irish migrants and draw them in to parish life. During the early 1950s, McQuaid reviewed his policy approach and took a number of strategic steps to create an administrative structure that proved highly durable.

McQuaid's starting points were that emigration would continue in the long term; the best way to safeguard moral and social welfare of emigrants was to ensure continued religious belief and practice at their destination; the majority of emigrants to Britain would settle there permanently; and that if steps were not taken to preserve the religious belief and practice of emigrants then not only would they be lost to the church but so also would their children and subsequent generations. To support continuance of religious practice, services were needed in Britain rather than in Ireland. In 1953, McQuaid established the Episcopal Committee for the Care of Emigrants as the body responsible for setting policy

for emigrants, overseeing the resulting services, liaising with the English hierarchy and reporting to the Senior Consistorial Congregation in Rome. Thus, through one committee, McQuaid was able to encompass all the strategic, policy, governance and accountability functions required. The documentation attests to McQuaid's role in establishing this committee and leading its work. Although he was careful always to defer to the chairman and secretary, they relied on reports submitted by McQuaid and his staff and endorsed his recommendations.

By 1957, McQuaid had instituted a range of initiatives to be delivered by Irish priests in England with the overall aim of maintaining religious belief and practice and achieving integration of Irish migrants within English parishes wherever possible. The Columban Fathers were leading work to extend the Legion of Mary in England as a means of involving and integrating English and Irish Catholics through a lay apostolate. The Columbans were also delivering the Camp Workers and Hotel Workers Chaplaincies as a means of ministering to migrants who could not fit easily into existing parish structures. The Enniscorthy House of Missions was responsible for co-ordinating the delivery of missions in English parishes by Irish missionary-priests and this enabled them to manage tensions that had sometimes arisen between Irish and English missionaries over the nature of these missions. The Emigrant Chaplaincy was operating to send Irish priests to parishes of high Irish settlement, through direct liaison between Irish and English bishops. All these initiatives reported to the Episcopal Committee through McQuaid.

McQuaid's achievement in establishing these structures and processes is considerable. However, there is little evidence that there was formal policy

discussion or debate either about the needs of emigrants or the services to meet them. McQuaid's leadership on these issues and his determination of policy does not appear to have been challenged by other bishops. Indeed, his leadership seems to have been welcomed, as was his willingness to take responsibility for reporting to Rome. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, McQuaid led the work of the Irish bishops for emigrants with much of the work (of report writing and liaison) being done initially by his personal secretary, Father Mangan, and, from the mid-1950s, by Monsignor Barrett, Director of the CSWB and the CPRSI. In 1960, Barrett was also appointed Director of the Catholic Youth Council, thus linking the key strands of moral welfare preventive work through one individual with clear reporting to McQuaid.¹ Having set up the structures, there is little evidence that outcomes were systematically evaluated or policy reviewed.

The Irish Catholic hierarchy, through McQuaid, identified maintenance of religious belief and practice as its key objective and considered that if this were achieved, moral and social welfare problems would be avoided. Viewed in this way, all Irish migrants could be considered as having similar needs. This made it difficult to create other narratives to identify specific groups with problems that might have benefitted from an alternative, more targeted approach. Those working in England with Irish migrants struggled to articulate exactly what their needs were or what should be done to address them. Hubey Daley identified this lack of clarity in the early 1950s, when he toured England on behalf of McQuaid and Frank Duff. It did not improve over the subsequent ten or so years. The NDS report noted that the Irish were regarded as a homogeneous

¹ Maire Ni Chionnaith, A short history of the Catholic Youth Council [consulted at: <http://www.cyc.ie/index.php/about-us/philosophy-of-youth-work/history-of-cyc> (accessed 30 September 2012)].

group for whom 'mass solutions' could be found. Rex and Moore, the sociologists who studied the Irish in Sparkbrook, found that the priest in charge of the Irish Centre saw 'a vast mass of Irishmen' with his role being to save them from 'drink and sex' but with little clear idea of how to approach this. McQuaid preferred 'pastoral' work to formal assessment of need or structured services to target specific problems but in reality this left the priests working with the Irish with very little to offer beyond house to house visiting and invitations to join parish activities. This may have been appreciated by those with a strong attachment to the church but these would likely have joined a parish anyway.

The narratives used to describe Irish migrants by those working with them were often pejorative. There was acknowledgement that there were 'good' Irish who attended Mass regularly and managed their lives along Catholic moral lines. These migrants needed little additional help or support. Those who did not attend Mass and who did not meet expected moral standards, particularly through their sexual behavior, drinking or aggressiveness, were seen as 'bad'. Furthermore, they were in some way responsible for their own badness and the way in which this then reflected on the Irish Catholic church made them doubly culpable. There was recognition that some emigrants were leaving for England woefully unprepared, with no job or accommodation arranged and without the skills to negotiate the complex administrative and other features of life in English cities and industries. However, these difficulties were seen as arising from the 'Irishman's inferiority complex', a term which was unhelpful in guiding any interventions to address the problems, not least because it put responsibility with the individual migrant rather than with structural problems

such as levels of education and life-skill development in Ireland. Attempts to help, such as that by Father McNamara of the London Irish Centre, often focused on trying to keep the new migrant within a 'good, Catholic atmosphere' and away from bad influences in wider society. As Hubey Daley noted, the mismatch between the large number of migrants and the meager resources available meant that this type of approach could only reach a small proportion of migrants and not necessarily those with greatest need. An aspect which can be seen with hindsight, but would not have been evident then, is that many of the struggling migrants may have come from industrial schools and other institutional care in Ireland where the abuse suffered may have been a driver for emigration. These individuals may not have found help based on Catholic hostel accommodation an appealing prospect.

The Irish hierarchy did see Irish migrants as having needs which the church had a responsibility to address, albeit that they saw these entirely within the context of religious and moral welfare. The Irish government accepted little responsibility for migrants, declining to regulate emigration of young people on the grounds of 'individual freedom'. They declined to provide funding on the grounds that emigrants in Britain were at least as well off as those at home and that providing funding for any initiative would open the floodgates to unmanageable demand. Again, this indicates that the government saw migrants as a homogeneous group and had little concept of sub-groups with particular needs. This lack of focus was evident in the plans to oversee a community trust fund to support emigrant activities related to welfare and culture. The Irish embassy concluded that the Irish in Britain were insufficiently organized to engage with the trust fund initiative. Rex and Moore noted that there were no

Irish-interest organisations in Sparkbrook and concluded that they were not needed because assimilation with the host community was straightforward. Both these conclusions overlook the possibility that Irish-interest organisations were not needed by the type of migrant most likely to have the skills to set up and run such organisations, such as Irish middle-class professionals. These people may well have felt no need for specific Irish-interest organisations and they were also able to engage directly with mainstream political activities, at local or national level, without the need to develop leadership skills through ethnicity-based community groups beforehand. Ethnicity-based organization has been seen as necessary to negotiate access to ‘jobs, concessions and special allocations’ from state or ‘para-state organisations’ by some migrant groups.² This has been theorized by Manuel Castells who notes that such groups may fall apart as their leaders move on to main stream political activity beyond the ethnic (or other interest) group.³ For the Irish, it appears that this initial, ethnicity-based phase was unnecessary. Whilst this meant that those with leadership ambitions could develop these in the wider local or national arena, those who lacked skills to negotiate for resources were left without leadership and support from their better skilled compatriots. Unable to articulate needs and demands themselves, they lacked others to do so for them and, therefore, their needs were easily overlooked.

During the Second World War, the British government valued Irish migrants as a source of labour for the war industries. The government had no high-level welfare policy specifically in respect of Irish migrants but did have a welfare

² Pnina Werbner, ‘The fiction of unity in ethnic politics’, in Pnina Werbner and Muhammad Anwar (eds.), *Black and Ethnic Leaderships: The Cultural Dimensions of Political Action* (London, 1991), p.115.

³ Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements* (London, 1983), p.325.

policy to support war workers generally. Within this policy, a local scheme, directed at Irish women, was set up in Birmingham through the Department of Labour, city council and Catholic diocese. This was the only scheme of its type and appears to have arisen largely due to the interests of key individuals in the area. After the war, the British government continued to encourage migration of Irish labour but neatly finessed the issue of Irish needs by defining the Irish as no different from the British in terms of access to health and social welfare services and benefits. This was the position in law but it did not remove the attitude among some elements of British society that the Irish should not be entitled to British welfare benefits. Exclusion from entitlements due to attitudes in public or voluntary services would have disproportionately affected those without the personal skills to negotiate their way through administrative systems. The impact of such attitudes was demonstrated by those British moral welfare organisations which pressured pregnant single Irish women to accept repatriation to Ireland because the welfare officers considered the Irish should not be allowed to access British services. There is evidence that the attitudes of officials towards the Irish have acted as a barrier to accessing other services such as housing.⁴

The English Catholic hierarchy's policy towards Irish migrants was that Irish migration was a long-standing phenomenon and that the Irish could and should integrate with local English parishes without the need for special provision. The English bishops were prepared to accept the initiatives of the Irish hierarchy so long as these supported the objective of integration. There is little evidence from the archives that the English hierarchy actively participated in the

⁴ Grainne O'Keefe, 'The Irish in Britain: Injustices of Recognition?', Sources, Automne 2003, p.37 [consulted at: http://hal.inria.fr/docs/00/61/27/20/PDF/The_Irish_in_Britain-Injustices_of_Recognition_.pdf (accessed 2 October 2012)].

development of policy or implementation of services for Irish migrants. It is clear from the archives that there was never a policy decision either jointly between, or within either the Irish or English hierarchy, to support the establishment of 'Irish Centres' in areas of high Irish migration. Initiatives to open Irish Centres were 'bottom up' rather than 'top down', arising in each case from specific local enthusiasms, from priests or lay people within an area, and each had a different concept of what such a centre should provide. The fact that so many centres did get established is testimony to the diffusion of power within the Catholic church. To take the example of the London Irish Centre, the London bishops largely left it under the auspices of the Irish priests' committee. There was no policy process by which the Bishops considered the Irish priests' proposal, so that, from a policy perspective, it was neither endorsed nor rejected. Instead, individual Bishops gave somewhat lukewarm support to it (including small financial donations) but took no steps to actively facilitate the development of the centre and expressed no concerns about the length of time it took to get off the ground. Rather, they left it to the devices of the Irish priests' committee, intervening only when evidence of managerial or financial shortcomings threatened to cause problems for the reputation of the church. Likewise, there is little evidence of collaborative policy making with the Irish hierarchy in respect of the emigrant chaplains, missions or other initiatives. English involvement seems to have been limited to operational input to identify parishes requiring emigrant chaplain support, help in organizing accommodation and action when problems arose (such as the request to withdraw Father Cleary).

The material covered in this study provides new insight into the way in which McQuaid and colleagues reacted to those outside the Irish Catholic hierarchy

who expressed views about Irish migrants or interest in collaborating on work with them. McQuaid clearly saw the needs of Irish migrants as moral and religious ones. As such, he regarded them as falling exclusively under the purview of the Catholic church. He regarded the Irish hierarchy as the body competent to speak on Irish migrant needs and services to meet them and, within this, he expected the Episcopal Committee and, often, the CSWB to be the conduits through which views should be expressed. He refused to affiliate the CSWB with the national network of 'emigrant advice bureau' supported by the Emigrant Chaplains' Association. He was hostile to the assessment of migrant need and its origins by the Newman Demographic Survey. Whilst McQuaid and Barrett were correct that the NDS report was largely based on anecdote and opinion, this had been acknowledged by the authors and was drawn from published sources. However, McQuaid took the opportunity to mount a personal attack on the authors and establish the Irish bishops (through himself) as the legitimate source of opinion on migrant welfare. He and Barrett also blocked any dialogue between the Catholic authorities, the Irish Association of Social Workers and the independent sociologist, Richard Hauser. The reasons given for not working with particular groups often appear reasonable as, for example, McQuaid's assessment of the Irish Association of Social Workers as 'inchoate'. Barrett's assessment of Hauser as a 'difficult bird' may also have been accurate, as discussed in Chapter 5. Nevertheless, Hauser did have relevant points to make about preparation for adult life (including migration) of pupils in Irish institutions which McQuaid and Barrett blocked from further consideration. This behavior was in line with McQuaid's well-known

reservations about lay participation and ecumenism.⁵ An exception to this pattern of unwillingness to collaborate with other bodies was made by McQuaid in respect of Helen Murtagh and her visit to Dublin during the war to improve collaboration on the repatriation of unmarried mothers and their babies. This is surprising given that Mrs Murtagh was not uncritical of services for these women in Ireland. However, collaboration may have been easier in this case since Mrs Murtagh's aims, of returning mothers and babies to Dublin with the babies baptized and both well provided for during their journey, would have sat comfortably with McQuaid's aim of prioritizing 'care for women and girls'. In addition, the two appear to have established a personal rapport.

Helen Murtagh and Eamon Casey both demonstrated the opportunities that the diffuse power structure within the Catholic church (in England and Ireland) offered to those with the initiative and strategic vision to develop their own approaches. Both succeeded because their initiatives, the Irish Girls' Club in the case of Mrs Murtagh and Father Casey's work on housing, were clearly defined services to meet clearly articulated needs. The Selly Oak Irish Girls' Club sat within the British government's policy framework for supporting war workers away from home so her work can be regarded as a response to an existing policy rather than the creation of policy *de novo*. Casey's work did involve the creation of a new policy approach, initially at local level but subsequently expanded nationally. As well as being clearly focused, both were also aware of constraints in terms of capital and revenue funding and did not base plans on ambitions that exceeded available resources. In addition, they saw their role as one of strategic oversight and were content to leave operational delivery with

⁵ John Charles McQuaid, 1940 to 1972 , Archdiocese of Dublin [consulted at: <http://www.dublindiocese.ie/content/john-charles-mcquaid-1940-1972> (accessed 3 October 2012)].

others. In Casey's case, this created a robust organization whose methods could be reproduced nation-wide through local branches and that could continue without his input after he was recalled to Ireland.

Overall, many of the initiatives set up to support Irish migrants over the period 1940 to 1972 proved remarkably durable. However, the lack of formal review meant that some of them continued beyond, or in a form that was no longer meeting, the original objective. This was most evident in the Hotel Workers Chaplaincy, where those working in it had expressed reservations about its continuance from early on. The Emigrant Chaplains slipped almost unnoticed from their original role of supporting newly arrived migrants to one of lending an extra pair of hands in parishes which had a large number of settled Irish people, including the young adult children of migrants. The Catholic Housing Aid Society (the organization built up by Casey) became part of the mainstream Catholic voluntary landscape rather than a specifically Irish agency. On the other hand, the persistence of organisations such as the social and community functions associated with the London Irish Centre indicate the demand from Irish people themselves for ongoing cultural separation, at least at some levels, rather than full assimilation with English society. The Catholic church was successful in establishing Catholicism as a core component of Irish identity and the church as the appropriate provider of services to meet Irish welfare needs. This left little room for any alternative constructions of Irish needs and left some of the most vulnerable migrants, without the skills to negotiate their way through British services and unwilling to seek help from the church, with little or no alternative sources of support.

Policy analysis usually focuses on public policy – what, as Klein and Marmor put it, governments do and do not do. This study has taken a broader approach to policy, looking not only at the Irish and British governments but also at extra-governmental organisations including the Catholic church in Ireland and England. Together, these organisations constituted a potential ‘policy network’ which could have operated to develop and implement welfare policy for Irish migrants. In reality, the organization with the greatest interest in migrant welfare was the Irish Catholic hierarchy, and within this the pre-eminent leader was McQuaid. Although he set up the Episcopal Committee for the Care of Emigrants, which could have controlled the agenda, determined policy and overseen implementation, these roles largely remained with McQuaid himself. McQuaid also retained the role of reporting to Rome and international Catholic bodies concerned with migration. The other members of the network were comparatively minor contributors to the policy arena, generally responding to McQuaid’s initiatives rather than developing pro-active policy themselves. However, the lack of detailed, top-down, formal policy and the diffusion of power not only within the network but throughout and between the constituent organisations, left considerable autonomy to those working ‘on the ground’ to develop and implement their own initiatives.

The lack of formal policy structures or processes for Irish migrant welfare posed a challenge for this study. There was no single collection of agendas, minutes, policy papers and so on that enabled easy reconstruction of the policy process. Reconstruction has been attempted using McQuaid’s papers as the ‘nodal point’ and tracking connections between his records and the other organisations involved where possible. A number of avenues for further

research emerge from this approach. Although McQuaid took a national lead on migrant affairs on behalf of the Irish hierarchy, the diffusion of power within the church does not rule out the possibility that individual bishops may have developed and implemented policies in their own dioceses, which may have taken a different approach to that of McQuaid. Analysis of archival records from dioceses other than Dublin would be interesting in this respect. The Irish government was dismissive of the extent and activity of Irish community organisations in England over the period covered by this study. It would be interesting to extend the research to test this assessment and also to track the development of community organisations to their more prominent place today. As found by this study, 'Irish Centres' were not a product of any high level policy but local developments in response to perceived need. This study has demonstrated the differences in approach of the London and Birmingham Centres. This analysis could be extended to include comparison with other centres, such as those in Manchester and Liverpool. The policy initiatives described in this study were all focused on newly arrived migrants. This is understandable in the case of new areas of Irish settlement, such as Birmingham. However, the London Irish Centre also prioritized new arrivals and the impact of previous Irish immigration, or the resulting presence of an established multi-generational Irish community, did not feature in the Irish priests committee discussions or assessment of migrant needs. Extending the study to include Manchester and Liverpool, both areas of high Irish immigration going back to the nineteenth century, would enable fuller analysis of the extent to which the presence of an established Irish community did, or did not, impact on policy development in these cities.

During the period covered by this study, there was an acceptance by both Irish and British policy makers and commentators that not only were there few Irish community organisations but that there was little need for them because, to use Rex and Moore's phrase: 'the opportunities for assimilation [were] there'. Subsequent developments call this into question. The 1997 report into discrimination and the Irish in Britain, commissioned by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), identified 104 community groups across three cities in England providing services and advice to the Irish. Some of these organisations targeted specific groups, such as Irish travellers, indicating a move away from the previous generic approach to the Irish as a homogeneous group.⁶ It is not clear from the CRE report what proportion of these groups were linked to the Catholic church but the services and support offered (which ranged from housing; help accessing social services, benefits or employment; to help with legal and anti-Irish discrimination issues) were secular rather than of a religious nature. By the mid-1990s, these Irish community organisations had sufficient lobbying power to persuade the CRE to commission a report into anti-Irish discrimination, a significant change from the position in the 1960s when the British government was able to deny that such discrimination existed.⁷ Furthermore, changing attitudes to racial discrimination had led to the Race Relations Act of 1976 and the establishment of the CRE, providing a public body through which the voice of the Irish community organisations could be heard.

⁶ Hickman, Mary and Walter, Bronwen, *Discrimination and the Irish Community in Britain, A report of research undertaken for the Commission for Racial Equality* (London, 1997), pp.85-87.

⁷ Ibid., p.5.

The present study ends in 1972, which marks not only the date of McQuaid's retirement but also the point at which the Dublin Diocesan Archives are closed. Extension of the study to cover the period from 1972 to the present would be of interest, not least to test the impact on policy and approach of the loss of the key driver and shaper of the original policy response. The years after 1972 offer a changed context for analysis, in terms of political background (the Troubles), changing economic circumstances in Britain and Ireland, and changing patterns of migration. Today, the Dublin Archdiocese still has a social care agency that traces its roots back to the Catholic Social Services Conference founded by McQuaid in 1941. Now known as Crosscare, one of its programmes, the Migrant Project, is the direct descendent of the CSWB. The project focuses on the provision of information, advocacy and referral to appropriate services of migrants in vulnerable situations. Like the CSWB before it, Crosscare provides a 'handbook' for intending migrants to Britain but this now contains detailed information on accessing services and benefits, employment and accommodation rather than advice on maintaining religious practice.⁸ Recent work has focused on identifying vulnerable emigrants, including young, poorly prepared migrants and those of any age with health, family or social difficulties, substance misuse, domestic or institutional abuse and Irish travellers, in order to better target services both in Ireland and the major English cities to which the majority migrate.⁹

By the late-1990s, the Irish bishops (through the Irish Episcopal Commission for Emigrants, the successor body to the Episcopal Committee on the Care of

⁸ Information on the Crosscare Migrant Project are available at: www.migrantproject.ie (19 February 2013).

⁹ Patricia Walls, *Still leaving – recent vulnerable migrants to the UK: profile, experiences and pre-departure solutions* (Dublin, 2005), p.3 [consulted at: <http://migrantproject.ie/documents/StillLeaving2005.pdf> (accessed 20 February 2013).

Emigrants established in 1953) were taking a broader view of migrant needs and lobbying the Irish government to develop a more strategic and evidence-based approach based on partnership working with appropriate funding and infrastructure.¹⁰ The government responded to this demand through a commitment to address the ‘special needs of those Irish emigrants abroad who are particularly marginalized or at risk of exclusion’ within the 2000 partnership agreement, ‘Programme for Prosperity and Fairness’.¹¹ This marked the first occasion on which the government included the Irish abroad as a specific category within its social inclusion and partnership agreements. This reflected growing public concern about the difficulties faced by some Irish emigrants abroad and the sense that increasing prosperity amongst the Irish at home should be shared with those who were struggling abroad.¹² The resulting taskforce was charged with reviewing current provision, assessing need, considering the role of voluntary organisations in meeting those needs, recommending future direction and estimating costs. Membership was drawn from a range of partner organisations, including the Episcopal Commission for Emigrants, the Irish Congress of Trades Unions, government departments, an Irish language organization, an English university department of Irish Studies and a New York Irish outreach project.¹³ Thus, the government had moved from a position of

¹⁰ In a report commissioned by the Episcopal Commission from an independent social worker: Brian Harvey, *Emigration and Services for Irish Emigrants: Towards a New Strategic Plan* (Dublin, 1999).

¹¹ Programme for Prosperity and Fairness, Section 4.6: Commitment to the Wider World (Dublin, 2000) [consulted at: http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/attached_files/Pdf%20files/ProgrammeForProsperityAndFairness.pdf (accessed 20 February 2013)].

¹² Goodbody Economic Consultants, *Value for Money and Policy Review of the Support for Irish Migrant Groups Programme* (Dublin, 2007), p.13 [consulted at: http://www.dfa.ie/uploads/documents/IAU/26july07_final_goodbody%20dofa%20report.pdf (20 February 2013)].

¹³ Ireland and the Irish Abroad: Report of the Task Force on Policy regarding Emigrants (Dublin, 2002) [consulted at:

abrogation of responsibility for emigrant welfare to one of accepting responsibility as part of the overall social inclusion agenda. The taskforce membership also demonstrates willingness on the part of the Irish hierarchy to work with other organisations in a way that they did not do under McQuaid's leadership.

Although not all the recommendations of the taskforce were implemented by the government, increased funding was made available through the Emigrant Support Programme. This provides an annual sum of money from which organisations providing front line advisory services or community care to Irish emigrants can apply for funding. Priority is given to organisations working with vulnerable or marginalized emigrants, including the elderly.¹⁴ Thus, those involved in delivering or funding services for emigrants have moved from a focus on 'Irish migrants' as a homogeneous group to a more nuanced approach based on identifying and targeting those at greatest need. Investigating the ways in which attitudes towards, and policy thinking around, Irish emigrants and their welfare needs changed from 1972 to the present time, when and if the relevant primary sources become available, would be a useful extension of the present study. Finally, many of those who migrated to Ireland during the 1950s and 1960s are still alive. Exploring their experiences of the initiatives for migrants, through an oral history approach, would add a valuable piece to the policy jigsaw.

<http://www.embassyofireland.org/uploads/documents/task%20on%20policy%20regarding%20emigrants.pdf> (accessed 20 February 2013).

¹⁴ Information for applicants for funding from the 2013 Emigrant Support Programme, <http://www.dfa.ie/uploads/documents/IAU/2013%20overview%20of%20the%20emigrant%20support%20programme.pdf> (accessed 20 February 2013).

APPENDIX

Policy Developments for Irish Migrants to Britain, 1940-1972: Key events

Year	Irish Hierarchy	Irish Government	English Hierarchy	British Government	International Migrant Policy	Projects covered in thesis
1940	McQuaid appointed to Dublin					
1941				Introduction of travel and work permits		
1942	McQuaid establishes CSWB (Emigrant Section)					Birmingham repatriation scheme for unmarried mothers
1943	H.J.A. Gray visits England to assess Irish migrant needs	Introduction of travel permits				Selly Oak Irish Girls Club
1947				Withdrawal of travel and work restrictions		
1948				British Nationality Act defines Irish as 'not foreign'		Irish priests' committee set up in London to organize 'Irish Centre'

1950						Irish priests' committee lobbies for funding from Irish government
1951					ICMC established PICMME established	
1952		Withdrawal of requirement for travel permits			<i>Exsul Familia</i> published Responsibility for Catholic migrant affairs given to Superior Council for Emigrants of the Sacred Consistorial Congregation, Rome PICMME renamed ICEM	
1953	Episcopal Committee on the Care of Emigrants established	Statement that government funds will not be provided to help the Irish in Britain				

1954	Proposal to develop Legion of Mary in Britain to encourage integration of Irish migrants within English church					Hubey Daly visits England on behalf of Frank Duff Barrett's report on CSWB submitted to ICMC Breda Congress
1955	Enniscorthy House of Missions given oversight of Irish parish missions in England Aedan McGrath appointed to lead Legion of Mary development in England					London Irish Centre opened
1957	Patricians, Hotel Chaplains scheme, Camp Chaplains scheme and Emigrant Chaplaincy established in England					Birmingham Irish Centre opened

1960						NDS report for ICMC Eamon Casey appointed as Chaplain in Slough
1962				Commonwealth Immigrants Act allows deportation of Irish offenders under certain circumstances		
1963						Casey appointed Director, CHAS Richard Hauser's report and approach to McQuaid and Irish Association of Social Workers
1965						Casey establishes Marian Employment Agency with Father John Dore
1966						Casey co-founds Shelter

1967	<p>Bishops' Lenten Pastoral Letter stresses need to improve preparation for emigration through school and parish based activities</p> <p>Association of Emigrant Chaplains established</p>					
1969		Government offer £10,000 to support work with intending migrants in Ireland – declined by McQuaid				
1972	McQuaid retires					

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